

DO THE DEMOCRATS HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY? Michael Crowley

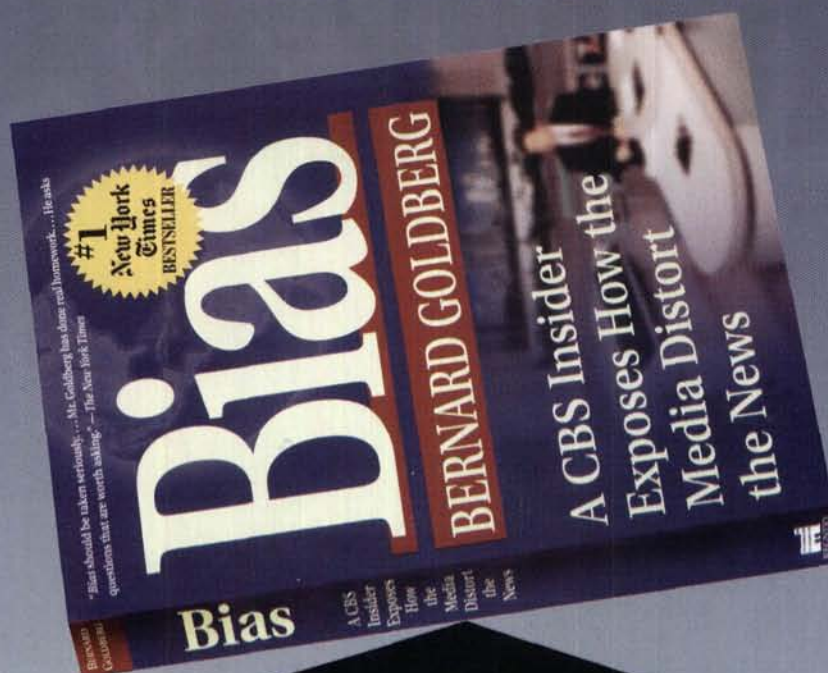
THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE NON-LESSONS OF HISTORY
James P. Rubin

THE NON-STRATEGY OF SHARON
Yossi Klein Halevi

THE TROUBLE WITH *BIAS*

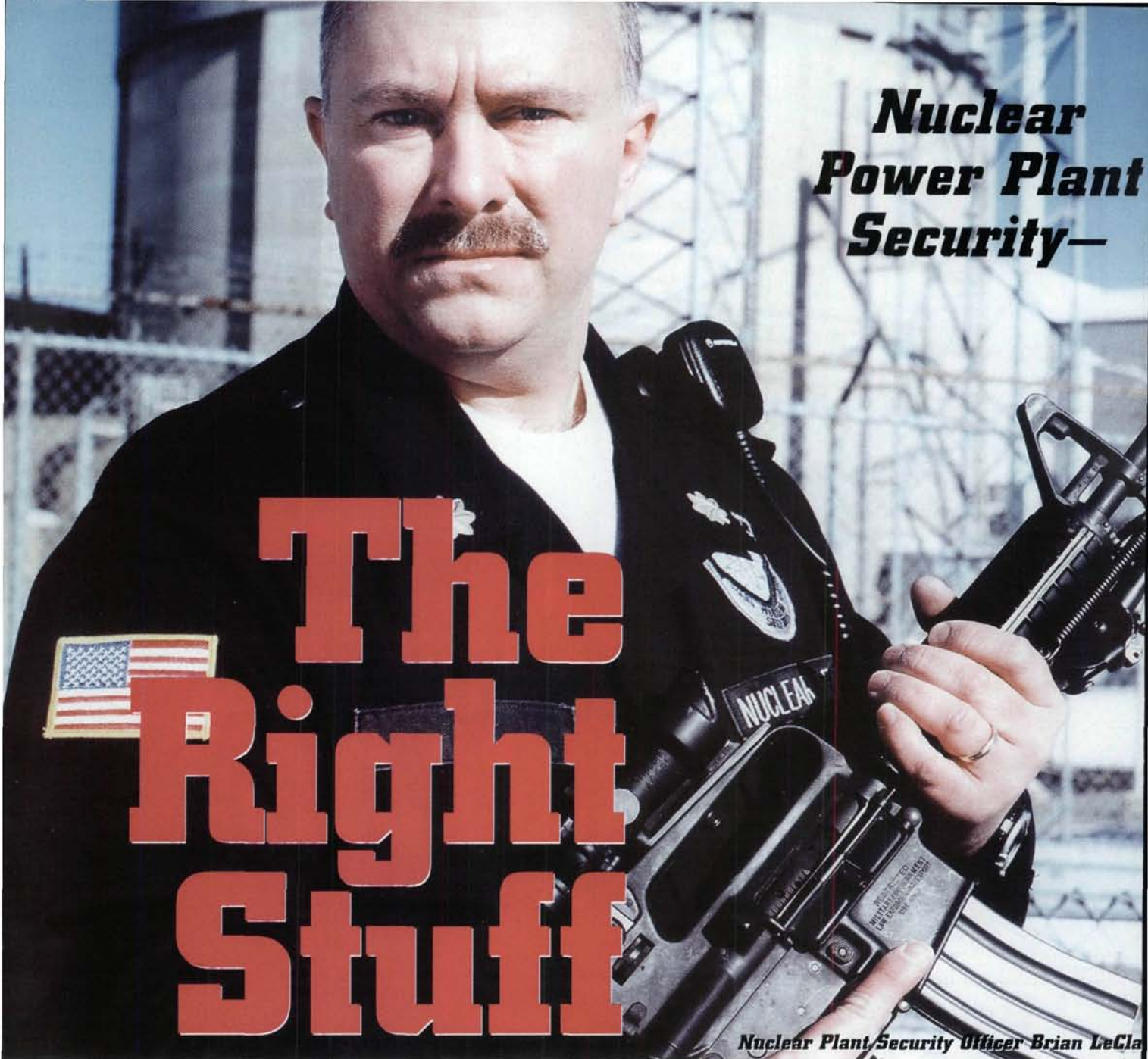
Jonathan Chait



MARCH 18, 2002

\$3.50US \$3.50CAN





**Nuclear
Power Plant
Security—**

The Right Stuff

Nuclear Plant Security Officer Brian LeClaire

Meet Brian LeClaire. Close combat pistol instructor and former U.S. Marine Corps sergeant.

The security of America's nuclear power plants begins with the highly committed... highly trained... well-compensated professionals who protect them. Brian LeClaire has what it takes.

Like LeClaire, 70% of the

Meet Brian LeClaire—

***Close combat pistol instructor and
former U.S. Marine Corps sergeant***

security professionals who protect America's nuclear power plants have prior military, law enforcement, or

industrial security experience.

They are subject to FBI background checks... psychological screening...

substance abuse testing... intense employment scrutiny... and physical fitness testing.

Their training is intense, exacting, and continuous. They are expert marksmen, annually certified in an array of weaponry. In short they're professionals!

Nuclear power plant security—it takes the right stu



NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE

www.nei.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

*A Journal of Politics
and the Arts*

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR
PETER BEINART
Literary Editor
LEON WISELITIER
Executive Editor
CHRISTOPHER ORR

Senior Editors
JONATHAN CHAIT, JONATHAN COHN,
MICHELLE COTTE, GREGG EASTERBROOK,
JOHN B. JUDIS, LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN,
ANDREW SULLIVAN, JAMES WOOD

Legal Affairs JEFFREY ROSEN
Managing Editor SARAH BLUSTAIN
Assistant Managing Editor AMANDA FAZZONE

Films: STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater: ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Poetry: GLYN MAXWELL
Art: JED PERL
Architecture: MARTIN FILLER
Dance: JENNIFER HOMANS
The New Republic Online
CHRISTIANE CULHANE

New Republic Books (Basic Books)
VANESSA MOSLEY

Contributing Editors
FOUAD AJAMI, AKHIL REED AMAR,
PETER BERKOWITZ, PAUL BERMAN,
JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN, NATHAN GLAZER,
ANTHONY GRAFTON, DAVID GRANN,
YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI, ANN HULBERT,
TONY JUDT, ROBERT KAGAN, MICHAEL KINSLEY,
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, JEREMY MCCARTER,
JOHN MCWHORTER, SHERWIN B. NULAND,
DAVID RIEFF, MAGGIE SCARF, LEE SIEGEL,
RONALD STEEL, CASS R. SUNSTEIN,
MARGARET TALBOT, E.V. THAW,
HELEN VENDLER, MICHAEL WALZER,
SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, ROBERT WRIGHT

Contributing Artists
JACK COUGHLIN, VINT LAWRENCE,
DAVID SCHORR, TOM TOLES

Associate Editors
MICHAEL CROWLEY, FRANKLIN FOER,
RYAN LIZZA, JASON ZENGERLE

Associate Literary Editor RUTH FRANKLIN
Art Direction JOE HEROUN, CHRISTINE CAR/H2C
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY

Production and Information-Technology Director
BRUCE STEINKE

Production Manager HENRY RIGGS

Assistant Editors
NOAM SCHEIBER, SARAH WILDMAN,
SACHA ZIMMERMAN

Assistant to the Editor ASHER PRICE
Assistant Literary Editor ERIN LEIB
Assistant Poetry Editor MELANIE REHAK

Reporter-Researchers
JULIE BOSMAN, DAVINA COHEN, REIHAN SALAM

President and Publisher
STEPHANIE SANDBERG
General Manager
ANNETTE POCICA

ADVERTISING SALES AND MARKETING
Associate Publisher
ELISE ADDE

Director of Advertising, West
JOAN STAPLETON TOOLEY
Director of Advertising, New York
TIM WHITING

Publishing Consultant DAVID NUDO
Marketing Director SARA ZYSKOWSKI
Associate Advertising Manager MEREDITH COSSA
Marketing Assistant ETHAN FISCHER

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Acting Controller MICHAEL SOUTHALL
Accounting Assistant VANESSA WILSON
Business Assistant SARA DEGRAEVE

THE NEW REPUBLIC ONLINE
Director of Business Operations ARI GERSEN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Chairman ROGER HERTOG
MARTIN PERETZ
MICHAEL STEINHARDT

WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARCH 18, 2002
ISSUE 4,548

- 4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Daniel Jonah Goldhagen v. his critics, &c.
- 6 **PETER BEINART** TRB: OVERSIGHT Can McCain-Feingold work? Only if the FEC does.
- 9 **THE EDITORS** CHEAP SHOT What Bush doesn't understand about welfare reform.
- 10 **NOTEBOOK** Does Ann Coulter want Norm Mineta dead? &c.
- 12 **MICHAEL CROWLEY** ON THE HILL: SPEECH IMPEDIMENT The Dems stay confused.
- 14 **YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI** JERUSALEM DISPATCH: PRISONER OF WAR Sharon's bind.
- 17 **LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN** POCKET PROTECTOR Chuck Hagel v. the war on terrorism.
- 19 **JEFFREY ROSEN** CLASS ACTION Why school vouchers are constitutional.
- 22 **JONATHAN CHAIT** VICTIM POLITICS Bernard Goldberg, author of the best-selling book *Bias*, is right that the media sometimes mistreats conservatives. What he and his supporters don't recognize is that's only one part of a much larger story.
- 26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: THE TRUTH OF FORM The inadaptability of Chekhov's plays into film is evident once again with *The Cherry Orchard*.
- 27 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: ANGELS IN AFGHANISTAN Tony Kushner's *Homebody/Kabul* is prescient and outdated, exhilarating and frustrating.
- 28 **KARL KIRCHWEY** POEM *Coulter Brook*
- 29 **JAMES P. RUBIN** SANTAYANA SYNDROME *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* by Walter Russell Mead
- 34 **NATHAN GLAZER** EDIFICE REX *Louis Kahn's Situated Modernism* by Sarah Williams Goldhagen; *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture* edited by Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault
- 38 **PAULA FREDRIKSEN** LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON *Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God* by Jack Miles
- 42 **ROB WALKER** NEW ORLEANS DIARIST: MASKED

On the Cover: Photo illustration by JOE HEROUN

On the Web: www.thenewrepublic.com

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 226, Number 10, Issue 4,548, March 18, 2002. (Printed in the United States on March 6, 2002.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated March 4 & 11, March 25 & April 1, July 8 & 15, August 5 & 12, August 19 & 26, September 9 & 16, December 2 & 9, and December 30, 2002 & January 6, 2003) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Meredith Cossa at (202) 331-7494 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions, \$59.94; foreign, \$99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, \$79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, \$4.00 (includes postage & handling). © 2002 by The New Republic, LLC. (ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

MARCH 18, 2002 : 3

Church and state

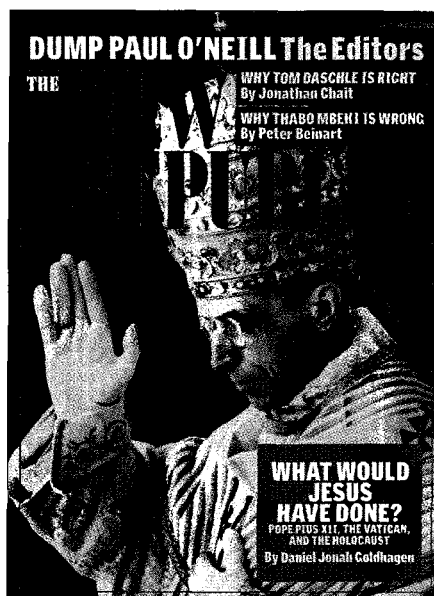
TO THE EDITORS:

Readers familiar with Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's 1996 work, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, will recognize the flavor of his "What Would Jesus Have Done?": an unrelieved, bitter attack on his subject, a sneering disparagement of other analysts for moral equivocation, a dismissal of most contemporary scholarship, and a hunger for the black-and-white, the simplest of historical explanations (January 21). Unfortunately, this is a subject in which tunnel vision and a highly selective use of evidence is becoming rampant, producing distorted images of Pius XII as a vicious antisemite on the one hand, or as a saintly rescuer of Jews on the other. It is high time—as Goldhagen's rant reminds us—to examine the events of more than half a century ago with an eye to the culture of that day and not our own. The Church could assist this effort by making available, to all responsible researchers, its full range of archival material on the subject. Writers could also help by putting aside their angry self-righteousness, or zest for denunciation or exculpation. To an important degree, Pope John Paul II and many within the Catholic Church have pointed the way forward with indisputable efforts for Catholic-Jewish reconciliation. The work is far from complete. Those who take up this question should do so responsibly, evenhandedly, and with a spirit of openness to the full range of evidence.

MICHAEL R. MARRUS
*Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe
Professor of Holocaust Studies
University of Toronto
Toronto, Canada*

TO THE EDITORS:

I take issue with Goldhagen's anti-Catholic essay. Instead of solid documentation, the article consists of conjectures, suppositions, insinuations. The April 18, 1919, letter that the apostolic nuncio in Bavaria, Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli, sent to Cardinal Gasparri in Rome is quoted out of context. Goldhagen condemns Pacelli as an antisemite and claims that the letter reveals Nuncio Pacelli's antipathy toward the Jews. This is not so. The letter highlights the uprising in 1919. It is anti-revolutionary and merely reports a fact. It describes a group of Bolshevik revolutionaries occupying the royal palace of the Wittelsbach. It is a report by Pacelli's assistant, Monsignor Schioppa, who felt helpless before the armed revolutionaries. Weighing the language of the letter,



one has to consider the terrifying circumstances Schioppa faced.

The leaders of these revolutionaries were Bolshevik Jews, sent to Germany to foment revolution. In his report to the secretary of state, the then-Nuncio Pacelli stated that a number of Jews among the revolutionaries were threatening, frightening, and unpleasant. He noted that the leaders of these terrorists were Jews sent from Russia.

This is a historical fact and has absolutely nothing to do with antisemitism. It was necessary to mention the terrorist leaders in Munich so that Pacelli's superior would learn that the Russian Communists were seeking to extend their power in various Western countries.

SR. MARGHERITA MARCHIONE, PHD
Morristown, New Jersey

TO THE EDITORS:

Goldhagen's fascinating essay is very good when dealing with history, but less so when it comes to theology. For example, in discussing Pius XII's statement, "On the Cross then the Old Law died, soon to be buried and to be a bearer of death," Goldhagen claims that the "Old Law" refers to the Jews and that they are to be a bearer of death. He then excoriates Pius XII for making such a false charge while the Jews were being slaughtered in Nazi Europe.

Yet Pius XII's statement has nothing to do with the Jews per se, but refers to the Old Testament and its covenant of Law. It assumes a familiarity with II Corinthians 3:6: "Who has made us competent to be masters of a new covenant, not in a written code, but in the Spirit; *for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.*" According to Paul, the problem with all the Old Testament laws is that people inexorably

sin and are thus condemned. The New Covenant of grace enables one to avoid such condemnation.

A more serious error is Goldhagen's claim, in the last sentence of his essay, that the Catholic Church claims to be the exclusive path to salvation. On the contrary, the Church recognizes that good people of all religions can achieve salvation, even as it asserts that Jesus plays a central role in this. It is hard to see why this should offend Jews or anyone else. After all, should Catholics be offended by the Jewish assertion that although they too can achieve salvation through good works, this is despite their false belief in Jesus' divinity, rather than because of it?

MARC B. SHAPIRO
*Weinberg Chair in Judaic Studies
The University of Scranton
Scranton, Pennsylvania*

TO THE EDITORS:

For those unfamiliar with many of the historical details of Catholic-Jewish relations, Goldhagen's article can serve as a powerful and compelling summary of Church antisemitism that has influenced the Western world for more than two millennia. It is a history that cannot and should not be ignored. Indeed, within the Church today, particularly since Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, there has been a growing awareness of the Church's responsibility to atone and repair its relations with Judaism and the Jewish people.

An extremely important development was the recent release of a document by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the pope's theologian, declaring that the Jewish concept of a messiah does not conflict with the Christian belief in Jesus. This is a revolutionary development that undermines a principal basis for Church antagonism and hatred of Jews down through the centuries. It should go a long way to counter the traditional belief that salvation for Jews was only possible through the Church.

While Goldhagen's article is informative and incisive on many of the historical issues, it fails to recognize the remarkable progress made in Catholic-Jewish relations during the past 35 years and the significant changes in Church doctrine. Moreover, Goldhagen's denunciation of Pius XII's policies and actions during the Holocaust may prove to be justified in the end; but, for the present, much is still unknown, because documentation in the Holy See's secret archives continues to be unavailable to historians.

The author is certainly aware that this absence of archival records is a barrier to

a more complete understanding of the Vatican's policies. He even cites the recent dispute between Vatican officials and members of the Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission—a panel jointly sponsored by the Church and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations to review published Vatican archival materials—over the Catholic and Jewish historians' joint request for additional documentation. The Vatican can avoid a rush to judgment by Goldhagen and others on the Pius XII issue by simply opening its entire archives to scholars.

SEYMOUR D. REICH
Chairman
International Jewish Committee for
Interreligious Consultations
New York, New York

TO THE EDITORS:

Thank you for Goldhagen's brilliant dissection of the Christian roots of the Holocaust. The Vatican (and some Protestant Churches) fostered genocide's "womb" (traditional antisemitism: "The perfidious Jews killed Christ") and provided the "egg" (modern antisemitism: "Emancipated Jews are a global threat to Christians"). A modern pseudoscience, ethno-Darwinism, fertilized this Church-born egg, bringing forth the most diabolical fruit in human history. As a manifestation of repentance, the 1998 Vatican publication "We Remember" falls unacceptably short of candor. The Church will have to choose between two models of itself: infallibility, and humanity (propensity to err, with willingness to correct error). Paradoxically, its moral authority to lead humans will be *strengthened* if it candidly acknowledges its human weakness.

HUGO S. CUNNINGHAM
Boston, Massachusetts

DANIEL JONAH GOLDHAGEN REPLIES:
Two things are known in the scholarly world. If you have evidence and reasoned arguments, you use them. If instead you disparage someone personally, it is because that is all you can do. At least Michael R. Marrus's string of accusations provide self-commentary. Still, if Marrus feels compelled to unleash his substantial ire, one might have thought that it is "high time" that he direct it at the Church that had spread so much antisemitism, against the national Churches that approved of the persecution of the Jews, against the clergy who participated in the mass murder of Jews, or against those who try to whitewash this past. But he says *not a word* about them, instead aiming his fusillades at the person who discusses

them—though curiously not at the authors of the many superb books (oops, I forgot—again—to disparage them) I reviewed in my essay. Of Marrus's hackneyed generalities and platitudinous maxims, one merits comment: "It is high time . . . to examine the events of more than half a century ago with an eye to the culture of that day and not our own." If guided by Marrus's dictum, the French Catholic bishops would not have declared in 1997 that their Church "sinned" for having "for centuries" taught its "anti-Jewish tradition" which bred "the venomous plant of hatred." We would also not judge the Slovakian and Croatian clergy, or even the German perpetrators, as culpable for their complicity in the Holocaust. Instead we would "examine" them indulgently "with an eye" for the profoundly antisemitic "culture of that day." Former Nazis when confronted by their misdeeds and crimes have long used variants of Marrus's forbearing formula. We acted, they would plead, as "was customary in those days" (*wie es damals üblich war*). "High time" indeed.

Marrus's exculpatory moral relativism is rejected and explicitly condemned by the very institution to which he indulgently wishes to apply it. The Catholic Church teaches eternal moral principles, valid for all times and cultures, which would include Catholic clergy just 60 years ago. The Church declares its principles the basis for judging a person's deeds. My forthcoming book, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*, examines the conduct of the Church during the Holocaust also using the Church's own moral principles. If the results are unflattering, will the Church's defenders brand not just by implication the French bishops for their agreement with me, but also Catholic doctrine as anti-Catholic? The book discusses what was not the topic of my essay, the important and complicated subject of the Church's substantial general progress and its substantial failures (a fair amount of gray!) in its relations with Jews since the war. Contra Marrus, we need not praise the Catholic Church every time we discuss its terrible record during the Holocaust.

As to the letters with substantive criticisms, Margherita Marchione does not seem to realize that repeating Pope Pius XII's antisemitic fantasies and accusations from his own signed letter (the Communists are "all Jews," the women are "lecherous," their leader is "repulsive," "intelligent and sly") as if they were true is hardly a winning defense.

Marc B. Shapiro ignores the context of

Pius XII's remarks. During the height of the mass murder, the pope did not tell Catholics that the Jews are innocent and that Catholics may not harm, but must try to protect, the Jews. Instead he proclaimed that the "Old Law" is a bearer of death. Whether the "Old Law" meant here "only" the laws of the Jewish Bible or was the stand-in for the Jews that it often was in Church parlance changes little. Declaring that Judaism brings death is inherently antisemitic. Shapiro's insistence that the Church's Bible maintains that Judaism brings death makes his subsequent assertion about salvation almost bizarre. Whatever hints the Church may make today in its elliptical statements about salvation, it has never changed its doctrine and official teachings, which remain that Jews cannot attain salvation.

Most notable about these letters is that, as if to confirm my criticism, they skirt all the indisputable facts about what the Church did to harm Jews. There is a fixation on Pius XII. Seymour D. Reich is right to work so hard to gain access to the Vatican's archives. But why do so many insist on neglecting the no less important failures and complicities of the national Catholic Churches during the Holocaust? ■



Mike Marshall / Santa Clara Univ. / STC 39
Major Fine Arts / Social Financial Aid



American Indian College Fund
Educating the mind and spirit

Please call 1-800-776-FUND or visit www.collegefund.org.

Special Thanks to the U.S. West Foundation for underwriting production costs for this advertisement.

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Oversight

OPPONENTS OF THE McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill that will likely hit the Senate this month make two arguments. The first, which I addressed in my last column, is ostensibly about principle. When campaign finance reform's critics say it will savage the First Amendment, they speak in the outraged tones of the ideologically pure. The second argument is different. It isn't about principle; it's about pragmatism. Money, the critics explain with a sigh, is like water. Plug one loophole, and a dozen others will open up. Even as we speak, they often say, crafty lawyers are devising crafty schemes that will make a mockery of your grand reforms.

But when you think about it, this argument is rather strange. After all, crafty lawyers devise crafty schemes to evade all kinds of laws. Tax lawyers, for instance, invent endless new ways to avoid paying taxes. But politicians and pundits don't generally respond by throwing their hands up and noting the similarities between money and water. Instead, they expect *our* crafty tax lawyers—the ones who work for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)—to expose these schemes and make people obey the law. Even if the United States shifted to a flat tax or a national sales tax—as some conservatives propose—those new systems would still depend on government lawyers plugging the loopholes that would inevitably arise.

And, in fact, we have a group of crafty lawyers whose job it is to keep other crafty lawyers from evading America's campaign finance laws. They work at the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The problem is that many of the same people who insist that campaign finance laws can't be enforced have been working for years to deny the FEC the power to enforce them. It's a nice trick. Campaign finance reform's critics gently explain to naïve reformers how the world really works. They just forget to mention that they're a big part of the reason it works that way.

The authors of the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)—the campaign finance system that today lies in ruin—recognized that their system would fall

into ruin unless it were effectively enforced. To do that, in 1974 they created the FEC and gave it broad powers to write regulations “reasonably related to the purposes of the enabling legislation under which it was promulgated.” In other words, if someone found a loophole that clearly violated the law's intent, the FEC could issue a regulation to close it.

For the first few years after the law was passed, politicians and parties generally complied with it. Then, in 1978, the FEC—recognizing that the authors of the 1974 reforms had wanted to preserve grassroots political activity—ruled that money for “party-building” efforts like voter registration was not subject to FECA's donation limits. It was a minor exception. And for the next decade or so, the FECA system continued to work reasonably well. McCain-Feingold's critics don't like to mention this, because it suggests that campaign finance reform laws aren't necessarily futile. But it's true.

Then, in 1988, Robert Farmer, head fund-raiser for Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis, hit upon an idea. To counteract the GOP's financial edge, he would use “party-building” money (later dubbed “soft money”) not for grassroots activities, but to fund the Duke's campaign. Rich Bond, deputy campaign manager for then-Vice President Bush, called the effort “illegal on its face.” But the FEC did nothing. So the Bush campaign followed the Dukakis campaign's lead. And over the course of 1988, they blew the soft money loophole wide open.

In 1996 the parties opened Farmer's loophole even wider, pouring five times more money into their presidential candidates' coffers than they had eight years earlier. Both the Clinton and Dole campaigns used soft money, FEC auditors found, to vastly exceed the legal spending limits governing presidential candidates who received federal matching funds. The auditors proposed that the campaigns be required to pay the money back. But it took the FEC's commissioners until 1999, three years after the election was over, to make a final decision. And their final decision was that the campaigns' use of soft money didn't violate the law.

Why does the FEC tolerate such flagrant violations? Because at the same time politicians have been blowing the 1974 campaign finance regime to smithereens, they have been emasculating the FEC. In 1979 Congress banned the commission from randomly auditing campaigns, as the IRS does taxpayers. Congress requires the FEC to follow an administrative procedure so cumbersome that it virtually guarantees no action until an election is over. And the six-member commission—split three-three between Democrats and Republi-

cans—often deadlocks rather than punish a candidate of one party or another. As then-FEC Chairman John Warren McGarry told *The Washington Post* in 1997, “we have our hands tied behind our backs.”

Not surprisingly, the fiercest opponents of campaign reform have also done the most to eviscerate the FEC. In 1998 Senate Republicans held Clinton's judicial nominees hostage in a successful bid to force him to appoint David Mason, a former aide to Trent Lott, as the commission's vice-chairman. In 2000, in a similar maneuver, they pressured him into choosing Bradley Smith, a protégé of arch campaign finance opponent Mitch McConnell. Both Mason and Smith consider strict campaign finance laws an abomination. And not surprisingly, since their appointments the FEC has deteriorated even further. In 2000 several Senate candidates—including Hillary Clinton and John Ashcroft—took campaign finance evasion to a new level. They set up “joint fund-raising” committees with their national parties so they could not just *spend* soft money, but basically *raise* it themselves as well. The commission voted four to two to overrule its staff and ignore the infractions.

If the FEC had done its job all these years—and kept soft money from swallowing the 1974 law—we probably wouldn't need McCain-Feingold. But by the same token, unless the FEC is radically overhauled, McCain-Feingold won't work. For instance, critics charge that since McCain-Feingold limits the parties' ability to funnel unregulated money to candidates, independent groups will emerge to do the same thing. McCain-Feingold tries to prevent that by limiting the expenditures independent groups can make in coordination with a candidate. But if the FEC doesn't aggressively check whether coordination is taking place, the loophole will undermine the bill.

Next month a task force led by campaign finance reform group Democracy 21 will propose replacing the FEC with a more muscular body. If they really believe what they now say about McCain-Feingold, Mitch McConnell and Co. won't object. After all, if crafty lawyers will inevitably surmount any new restrictions, then it really shouldn't matter whether the agency enforcing America's campaign laws has teeth or not. The result will be the same either way. But, of course, McCain-Feingold's critics will object, furiously, because they're afraid that with real enforcement, campaign finance reform might just work. And in so doing, they will tacitly admit that they don't really think money is like water after all.

PETER BEINART



***Knowledge is power.
It's also security,
responsibility and
independence.***

Everyone knows the benefits of homeownership. But not everyone knows the ropes. Not everyone knows that good credit is essential for getting a mortgage. That down payments need not overwhelm. Or that the mortgage process isn't quite so scary. For all the first-timers, fear not. Our website, freddiemac.com/homebuyers, now offers a complete step-by-step guide to buying a home. Plus an entire curriculum on the subject of good credit: how to get it, how to keep it and how to use it to finance a home. It's a virtual Homeownership 101 for those just starting out. The diploma is three bedrooms, two baths and a fireplace.



www.freddiemac.com

Apply Liberal

Lather, Rinse,
Repeat

Revitalizing
Progressive
Politics

\$2.95

THE AMERICAN
PROSPECT

Detangling
Right-wing
Schemes

Nourishing
The Liberal
Imagination

www.prospect.org

1-888-MUST-READ

“The nation’s most influential liberal publication*”
is available by subscription, on the web, and in bookstores. **Newsday*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Cheap Shot

IT DIDN'T TAKE long for the usual suspects to condemn President Bush's new welfare reform proposal. "[A] huge step backwards," said Deepak Bhargava of the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support, "a gift to the far right of the Republican

Party." Peter Edelman, the Georgetown University law professor and former welfare adviser to President Clinton, declared that the proposal "flies in the face of everything we've learned from the last five years." His wife, Children's Defense Fund President Marian Wright Edelman, pronounced that the Bush "welfare plan will leave millions of children behind."

All of which might lead you to assume that Bush's welfare reform plan is right on the money. After all, six years ago many of the same people were hurling similarly hyperbolic charges at the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act that President Clinton signed into law in 1996. (Peter Edelman was so incensed by Clinton's decision that he left the administration in protest.) And, as history has shown, the critics were spectacularly wrong. Far from leading to "children [sleeping] on grates" and "scenes of social trauma such as we haven't known since the cholera epidemics," as Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously predicted, welfare reform has proved one of the great public policy successes of recent American history. Not only have welfare case loads declined by half since 1996, but 5.4 million people—including 2.6 million children—have been lifted out of poverty. Indeed, there are fewer American children in poverty today than at any time since 1978.

Despite having the right enemies, however, the president's plan still gets welfare reform wrong. And that's because it ignores the critical lesson of the 1996 bill's success: You can't do welfare reform on the cheap.

The Bush plan correctly recognizes that getting welfare recipients into jobs that pay a living wage must be the focus of any successful reform effort. To that end, it would require that 50 percent of welfare recipients in every state (rising to 70 percent by 2007) work 40 hours per week, up from the 30 hours that the law currently demands. What's more, the plan would close a loophole that allows states to reduce the num-

ber of welfare recipients who must work by the same amount as the welfare rolls have declined. In states that have experienced a particularly dramatic welfare roll drop, this "credit" effectively results in no work requirement at all.

The problem is that, while it requires work, the Bush plan doesn't take the steps necessary to help welfare recipients find it. That's likely because those steps cost money. It's no coincidence that welfare reform's most celebrated success story—the Wisconsin Works program designed by former Governor and current Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson—is also very expensive, spending

over 45 percent more per person than the state's old welfare system. Unfortunately, Republicans have been predictably reluctant to spend money on welfare reform. Indeed, some Capitol Hill GOPers urged Bush to reduce the \$16.5 billion the federal government gives the states each year in welfare block grants—money states use to fund things like job-training programs and transportation subsidies—since welfare rolls have declined since 1996. Bush, to his credit, refused to go along: His plan keeps the grants at their current level. It also holds steady the \$4.8 billion the federal government gives the states each year in child care subsidies—money that's absolutely vital to single mothers trying to enter the workforce.

But holding steady is not enough. As the welfare rolls dwindle to the hardest cases, providing resources to help these people move from welfare to work becomes even more critical. Fortunately, in the same week Bush announced his plan, two Democratic senators, Indiana's Evan Bayh and Delaware's Tom Carper, unveiled their own welfare reform proposal: the Work and Family Act. Like Bush's plan, it would increase the work requirement; but, unlike the president's proposal, it would make that requirement achievable by providing an additional \$5 billion in child care funds. The Bayh-Carper bill further improves on the Bush proposal by restoring public assistance—and not just food-stamp eligibility, like the Bush plan—to legal immigrants, who were unfairly targeted by the 1996 reform. It also requires men who father children while on welfare to go to work to pay child support; and it appropriates money to reduce teen pregnancy.

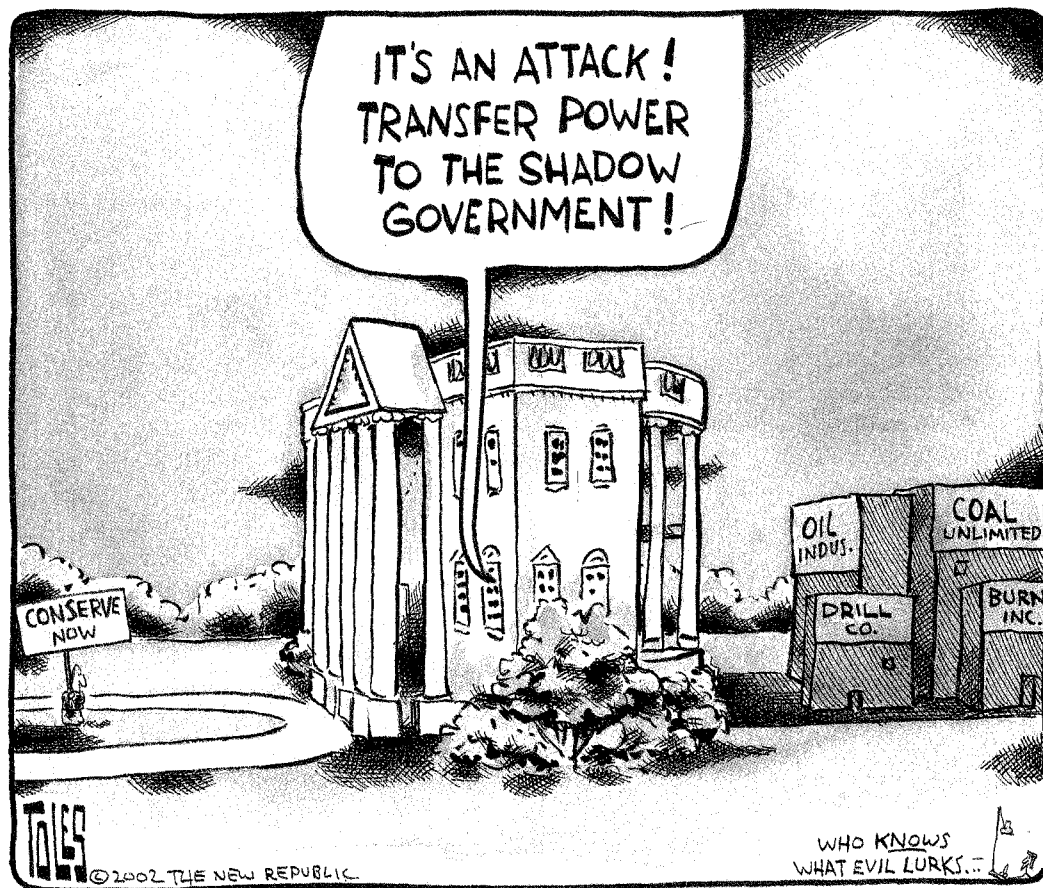
As President Bush said when he unveiled his plan, "We ended welfare as we've known it, yet it is not a post-poverty America." He's right: Today's challenge is ending poverty as we know it. Going soft won't accomplish that, but neither will being cheap. ■

TRADING DOWN I: This week's decision by the White House to impose quotas on steel imports is remarkable not just for its hypocrisy, but for the timorous manner with which it has been accepted by conservatives. Tariffs, after all, are taxes assessed at the border—and, as such, an abomination in the eyes of most of the president's conservative allies. Take anti-tax advocate Grover Norquist, who in a December article in *Investor's Business Daily* described tariffs as a root cause of the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the Great Depression. Given such unhappy precedents, one might have imagined Norquist would be rather concerned about one of the most blatant acts of American protectionism in years. But if he is, he's doing an admirable job of hiding it. "It's easy for me to say that Bush is going to win big in 2004 and people will look back and say, 'We didn't need to do this,'" Norquist told *The Washington Post*. "But it's not my job on the line." One could credit the staunchly free-trade *Wall Street Journal* editorial page for describing the decision as "President Bush's worst day so far"—except for the fact that this condemnation appeared in a 100-word microeditorial at the bottom of the page under the heading "Asides." By contrast, when Bush gave a speech last May declaring that "Open trade is not just an economic opportunity, it is a moral imperative," the *Journal* delivered a full-length editorial swoon: "[Bush] gave a strong and eloquent speech Monday on the moral basis for free trade. You won't hear Dick Gephardt or Tom Daschle do that." Maybe that's because Gephardt and Daschle aren't quite so shamelessly hypocritical.

TRADING DOWN II: Readers of *The New York Times* and other media may already be familiar with the bilious anti-Semitism directed at former Bill Clinton fixer Rahm Emanuel in his primary race for an open House seat in Chicago's North Side. Last week a local Polish leader backing Emanuel's opponent Nancy Kaszak wrongly suggested that Emanuel had dual citizenship and had served in the Israeli army and bizarrely referred to the way "certain elements, to which he gave his allegiance, defiles [sic] the Polish homeland." But largely lost amid this filth is another peculiar politi-

cal attack to which Emanuel has been subjected—this one from EMILY's List, the Washington-based fund-raising group whose mission is to elect pro-choice Democratic women to political office. Earlier this month EMILY's List kicked off a \$400,000 ad campaign in the district—but not, as you might expect, pumping up Kaszak as a heroic champion of abortion rights. Rather, the group is slamming Emanuel over his support for NAFTA and his role in a utility merger that allegedly led to local job cuts. ("Washington insider Rahm Emanuel says he fights for working people.... Tell him it's wrong to trade away Illinois jobs.") It's hard to see what these ads have to do with the mission of the group, which solicits small donations from pro-choice women around the country—many of whom would presumably be surprised to find their money funding attack ads against a devoutly pro-choice Democratic candidate such as Emanuel. EMILY's List may have found some heretofore undetected connection between free trade and abortion rights—one that has so far escaped prominent, pro-NAFTA EMILY's List heroines such as Nita Lowey and Nancy Pelosi. But somehow we doubt it.

IDIOCY WATCH, CONT'D: "According to initial buoyant reports in early February, enraged travelers rose up in a savage attack on the secretary of transportation. Hope was dashed when later reports indicated that the irritated travelers were actually rival warlords, the airport was the Kabul Airport, and Norman Mineta was still with us."—syndicated



columnist Ann Coulter, expressing disappointment that U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mineta—whom Coulter condemns for opposing racial profiling—has not been killed (as Afghan minister for Air Transport and Tourism Abdul Rahman was). The comment appeared in a February 28 column available at *frontpagemagazine.com* entitled “Mineta’s Bataan Death March.” Mineta is Japanese-American.

DEPARTMENT OF POTS AND KETTLES: “Disgusting.”—one-word statement released by House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, February 28. DeLay was responding to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle’s statement that, though the war on terrorism had been successful to date, “the continued success I think is still somewhat in doubt” and “there is expansion without at least a clear direction.”

“I’m saying that the whole reason for us going in there was wrong.... This president has no plan. He started the bombing with no plan, and he has no plan for the end.”—DeLay, May 2, 1999, five weeks into the Kosovo bombing campaign

ET TU, ERSKINE? It’s little wonder that former Clinton administration official Erskine Bowles isn’t talking much about his old boss in his North Carolina Senate campaign. After all, it wasn’t that long ago that Jesse Helms—who is vacating the Senate seat Bowles hopes to fill—

famously (and tastelessly) remarked that Clinton “better have a bodyguard” when he visited the Tar Heel State. But it’s one thing to disown President Clinton; it’s another to embrace his fiercest enemies. A 60-second TV spot that the Bowles campaign rolled out this week boasts about the candidate’s service as White House chief of staff and director of the Small Business Administration. But not only does the ad fail to mention whom Bowles was working for when he held those jobs; as a narrator details Bowles’s Washington service—“It was Erskine Bowles who brought Democrats and Republicans together to negotiate the first balanced budget in thirty years”—the ad features a photo of a smiling Bowles standing with *Trent Lott*. Too bad he couldn’t find a Polaroid of him with Strom Thurmond as well.

A BOOK FROM HEAVEN: We would be delighted to announce the publication of “*A Problem From Hell*”: *America and the Age of Genocide* by Samantha Power (Basic Books/A New Republic Book), except that delight is too inappropriate and too insubstantial a response to such a book about such a subject. Power’s book is nothing less than a masterwork of contemporary journalism and contemporary conscience. Her scholarly research and investigative reporting into the atrocities of Cambodia, Iraq, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo will trouble her readers’ sleep. Unlike other treatments of these terrible themes, moreover, Power’s eloquence is harnessed to a grimly detailed interest in policy. Her extraordinary book is not a philosophical meditation, it is a chillingly historical study of American inaction against evil and a ringingly persuasive prescription for American action against evil. Everybody in the foreign policy apparatus of the American government must read it; and also every citizen who cares about the moral record of the United States. It is an angry, brilliant, fiercely useful, absolutely essential book. Power has written for this magazine for many years, and so we take a special pride in her achievement; but her achievement is finally a tribute to the country whose failings she has witheringly described. ■



On the Hill Speech Impediment

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

WHEN A PARADE of Democratic heavyweights spoke up about the war on terrorism last week, it sure sounded as though the Democratic National Committee (DNC) had faxed a new set of talking points around town. Democrats Robert Byrd, Fritz Hollings, Joe Biden, and Charles Rangel kicked things off on Wednesday, February 27, with questions about the defense budget and the progress of the war. Responding to reporters' questions the next day, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle fretted that "there is expansion [of the war] without at least a clear direction." After Republicans savaged Daschle—Tom DeLay called his comments "disgusting"—Massachusetts Senator John Kerry lashed back at Republicans who "shield policies from scrutiny behind a false cloak of patriotism."

Based on the GOP's reaction, you might think a tie-dyed, barefoot Democratic mob had burned American flags on the Capitol steps. The media was more measured, but it too treated Daschle's statements as a major, new Democratic offensive. "Meet the Press" host Tim Russert, for instance, asked Daschle last Sunday whether "beginning to micro-manage" the war might make the United States look divided. This implied Daschle had offered a detailed policy address ruling specific terrorism targets in or out.

That couldn't be further from the truth. Contrary to popular belief, Democrats have not rolled out a coordinated offensive, and they haven't set out any new principles for the war. "This wasn't a strategic decision on anybody's part," says an aide to one of the dissenting Democrats. Rather, a handful of them happened to vent about the war around the same time, each for different reasons. Byrd, Hollings, and Biden, after all, are loose cannons—famous for shooting off their mouths on a whim. Rangel has been complaining about Bush's war aims since the "axis of evil" debate began. And Kerry, who is all but openly running for president, was speaking before an audience of hard-core New Hampshire Democrats. As for Daschle, he opened his routine Thursday press conference that day with a discussion of election reform, campaign finance, Social Security, and steel. It was only after goading by reporters that he broached the subject of the war. And within a couple of hours his office had released a statement firmly insisting that the "remarks indicate no criticism of President Bush or his campaign against terrorism." (Daschle reaffirmed this even more strongly after several U.S. troops died in Afghanistan a few days later.)

Intentionally or not, however, Democrats have now declared that they are not unconditionally supportive of Bush's

war plans. Which raises the question of just how they would do things differently. After all, none of the criticism of the war amounted to a substantive policy critique. Democrats were simply asserting the right to assert themselves. And that's the problem. It's not that Democrats are wrong to raise questions about the war. It's that they don't know what they want to say. And that's nothing new. It's been the Democrats' problem since the day George W. Bush took office.

FOR MORE THAN a year Democrats have been trying to come up with a consistent message. But nothing seems to stick. Last summer they were making headway with attacks on Bush over the Social Security and Medicare "lockbox"—until September 11 rendered that moot. Attacks on Republicans for delaying an airport security bill and larding up the economic stimulus plan with corporate tax cuts didn't resonate in the polls. The party pounced on the Enron scandal, hoping to use it as a magic metaphor for everything wrong with the Bush White House. But several Democrats have been splattered by the Enron story, which is fading anyway. Worst of all have been the conflicting messages about the Bush tax cut from Daschle, House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, and Ted Kennedy—which together made the party look badly confused. The party's ace in the hole was the recession, which Democrats assumed would send the president's approval numbers plummeting. But now the economy is recovering, and Democrats are again fumbling for something new to say.

Their task isn't easy. The White House plots the president's every utterance with neurosurgical precision. Republican leaders regularly receive carefully wrought sound bites dreamed up in the West Wing. At the famous White House "Office of Strategy," Karl Rove & Co. plan their agenda months and even years down the road. Congressional Democrats, by contrast, have no such central direction. Party leaders like Daschle and Gephardt must strain to please their diverse caucuses. The party lacks a formal, organized brain trust.

Democratic officials have been trying to remedy that problem of late. Since last month, a group of about ten Democratic operatives has been gathering in a conference room at the DNC headquarters every weekday morning at eight o'clock to plot their message and respond to White House events. Led by DNC Policy Director Gerry Kavanaugh, the group includes strategists from the party's House and Senate campaign committees. Joining them by speakerphone are aides to Daschle, Gephardt, and Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, who coordinates message efforts among House Democrats.

But these meetings focus on daily tactics, not long-term strategy. Which is why an overlapping group of Democrats has been meeting informally to construct a broader agenda for the 2002 election. It includes officials from the party committees, the House and Senate leadership, outside party consultants, and ex-White House hands such as former Clinton chief of staff John Podesta.

The fundamental problem facing these Democrats is a familiar one: how to please faithful liberals without alienating moderate voters in the rural districts and states on which control of Congress hinges. One message already on display

Bureaucracy and School Leadership

Chester E. Finn Jr. is a distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education; and president, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Nothing matters more to an organization's success than the quality of its leadership, and nowhere is that clearer than in public education. Twenty years of research have shown that effective schools nearly always have strong principals and that successful school systems nearly always employ effective superintendents. Yet **there are not nearly enough qualified people to lead some 91,000 public schools and nearly 15,000 school systems.**

What challenges do they—and we—face in trying to get more strong leaders for U.S. schools? The policy research organization Public Agenda recently set about to answer that question. It surveyed 1,800 principals and superintendents. The results are fascinating, sobering, and fraught with policy implications. Key findings include the following:

1. "Superintendents and principals . . . voice confidence that they can improve public education, but say their effectiveness is hampered by politics and bureaucracy." Four-fifths of superintendents and half the principals cite that as the main reason talented people vacate those roles. Among their foremost gripes: excessive litigation, "teacher union fanatics," and school board meddling.

2. "What superintendents and principals need most, they say, is more freedom to do their jobs as they see fit—especially the freedom to reward and fire teachers." Fewer than one-third say they have the autonomy and authority either to "reward outstanding teachers and staff" or to "remove ineffective teachers from the classroom." (By contrast, four-fifths say they have the freedom to deal with student discipline.)

3. "School leaders are far less worried about standards and accountability than about politics and

bureaucracy." Although principals and superintendents have multifarious complaints about standardized testing as used in their districts—and superintendents are far more bullish about test-based accountability arrangements than are principals—they're much more bothered by the shackles on their wrists.

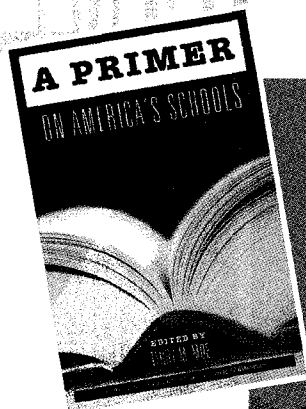
4. They are concerned about money. Yet almost three-quarters say they can manage with the budgets that they have. Most vexing on the resource front are external mandates that limit their ability to spend those budgets as they think best. The worst offender is special education for disabled youngsters. "According to 84 percent of superintendents and 65 percent of principals . . . special education issues exact an inordinate amount of district money and other resources."

5. Administrators believe that today's university-based training programs for "school leaders" are not adequate. Sixty-nine percent of principals and 80 percent of superintendents say such programs are "out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's schools." One principal commented, "**If you want more qualified superintendents, change the focus of prep programs from making researchers to creating practitioners.**"

Public Agenda president Deborah Wadsworth concludes this report on an upbeat note, observing that the most remarkable quality of today's public school administrators is their "optimism and confidence." Still, one can hardly read this pathbreaking survey without recognizing that finding executives able to lead U.S. schools out of their present quagmire would be a whole lot easier if we'd agree to cut the red tape and really put them in charge. Charter schools, anyone?

— Chester E. Finn Jr.

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



Want to learn more about K-12 education policy?

Visit us on-line at www.hoover.org or contact us to receive a complimentary copy of *A Primer on America's Schools*—11 chapters by Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education.

Hoover Institution

Ideas that change society

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

Tel: (650) 325-7000 Fax: (650) 325-7001

Info@hoover.org www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

posits a battle of "local interests" versus "special interests." Voters will be urged not to support Congressman Jones because his votes for corporate allies of the White House—Enron and other big energy companies, for instance—put local highway projects, or health clinics, or whatever, at risk. One leading party strategist recently described it as "basically 'The People versus The Powerful' again." For instance, Democrats recently polled the following question: "Enron, like many of the biggest corporations, used money and influence to get their way, at the expense of the public. We need leaders who will attack the abuses by big corporations that have too much influence over what happens in Washington." Fifty-eight percent of registered voters polled agreed a "great deal," while another 26 percent agreed a "fair amount."

As for specific issues, some Democrats also want to focus on the environment, which the party has neglected in recent months. Conservative candidates fear the issue makes them sound like Kennedy liberals; others argue that few people actually vote on the issue. But some party strategists are unconvinced and want to find out more about how the issue plays among swing voters. And then, of course, there are the old, reliable themes of Social Security, Medicare, and health care in general—issues on which Democrats retain a clear advantage over Republicans. But Democrats are still searching for ways to score points on these issues. Budget matters like Social Security and Medicare are hard to talk about when the war has made the public more tolerant of deficits. And with Bush effectively blurring differences on a patients' bill of rights and prescription drugs, Democrats are still grasping for a foothold.

BUT WHEN IT comes to war strategy, don't expect specifics from Democrats anytime soon. After all, none of the Democrats who spoke up last week offered any specific policy prescriptions. When asked about the legitimate argument that a larger commitment of U.S. ground troops might have caught Osama bin Laden and other Al Qaeda leaders last year, for instance, Daschle refused to "second-guess what has been done to date." Ultimately, the most provocative thing he had to say was that the war effort will have failed if the Al Qaeda leadership isn't hunted down. Duh.

Nor do many Democrats have the political credentials to talk about the war at all. Decorated veterans like Kerry are all too rare in the party. (In his largely overlooked speech last weekend, Kerry put Republicans on notice that he plans to make use of his military service: "[L]et me be very clear to Senator [Trent] Lott and Tom DeLay: One of the lessons I learned in Vietnam fighting in a war they did not have to endure ... is that if I ever reached a position of responsibility, I would never stop asking the questions that make our Democracy strong.")

As Kerry's speech to party loyalists suggests, a big reason Democrats are mentioning the war at all is pressure from core supporters. It's no coincidence, one longtime party aide notes, that Democrats spoke up soon after returning from a weeklong congressional recess. "Their constituents were very disappointed in their silence. People said, 'You're not even doing the loyal opposition thing.'"

In the end, however, Democrats will have to do better than just asserting their right to assert themselves. They need only look to South Dakota, where a competitive Senate campaign has already devolved into a furious duel over the candidates' patriotism. Last month Republican Representative John Thune began airing ads attacking the incumbent, freshman Democrat Tim Johnson, for voting (pre-9/11) against the B-2 bomber and missile defense "instead of strengthening our national security." This is what the future looks like for Democrats. "Unless Republicans see that it is to their political disadvantage to talk like Richard Nixon, they'll keep it up," says a party strategist. "The only way it succeeds is if Democrats let it succeed." But first they have to come up with something to say. ■

Jerusalem Dispatch Prisoner of War

By YOSHI KLEIN HALEVI

THIS SHOULD HAVE been Ariel Sharon's moment. The man who built his career on the argument that terrorism must be fought without compromise now heads a nation that experiences terror attacks seemingly by the hour. Sharon's decades-long attempt to forestall a PLO state has been vindicated: The Oslo process has transformed Palestinian terrorism from sporadic attacks by underground bands into a sustained campaign directed by the administration and police of the emerging state next door. Sharon's war of excess in Beirut has become a defensive war for Tel Aviv.

Yet even as Sharon substantially escalates in response to the unprecedented terrorist assault, he's stopping short of all-out war on the Palestinian Authority (P.A.). At the same time, he is resisting Labor Party demands that he resume negotiations with the Palestinians, even under fire. Instead, he muddles along an increasingly precarious middle path between war and peace, balancing constituencies on the right and left, and waiting for outside events to save his government and his country.

On one side, demands that Sharon act decisively to destroy Yasir Arafat and his regime are coming not only from the hard right (in particular Benjamin Netanyahu, who now beats Sharon in the polls), but also from moderates like Justice Minister Meir Sheetrit and leaders of the religiously extreme but politically centrist Shas Party. Balanced against this, however, is Sharon's overriding desire to preserve his coalition with the Labor Party. At a recent Labor Party meeting—summoned to debate Yossi Beilin's proposal that the party quit the government—speakers noted that only Labor's presence in the cabinet is preventing hawks from leading Israel into war. The obvious corollary is that if Sharon yields to the hard-liners, Labor will quit. Indeed, within Labor there are growing calls to do precisely that.

Sharon emerged from Lebanon convinced that Israel

Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Teaching Democracy

By **SANDRA FELDMAN**, President
American Federation of Teachers

What do teachers and education have to offer in a war with the shadowy, well-funded network of terrorists who attack our country and its values? The answer: plenty. Education goes right to the heart of this conflict, which is a battle of ideas about values: Who governs? By what right do they claim power? Are there free elections? Are free speech, a free press, independent trade unions, and free enterprise protected? Are people free to worship—or not—as they wish? Do women and other groups enjoy basic human rights?

Most Americans with a high school diploma have been exposed to the revolutionary idea on which our country is founded: that a democratic government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. They learn that our Constitution and Bill of Rights set out a blueprint for a free society grounded in the rule of law. Although our schools could—and should—do more, each year, young people, inspired by democratic ideals they learn in a classroom, become active in the political and civic life of their communities. And this happens in most democratic nations.

The greatest threats

History teaches us that the greatest threats to freedom and security arise from anti-democratic regimes and totalitarian ideologies. We know that students who go to school under repressive regimes are not exposed to democratic ideas, in either their textbooks or classroom discussions.

The events of the last few months make painfully clear that we cannot take the survival or spread of democracy for granted. The central drama of modern history continues to be the struggle to establish, preserve, and extend democratic values—at home and abroad. And as the inhumanity of terrorist acts demonstrates, these values do not come naturally. Devotion to human dignity and freedom, to equal rights, to social and economic justice, to the rule of law, to civility and truth, to tolerance of diversity, to mutual assistance, to personal and civic responsibility, to self-restraint and self-respect—must be taught and learned and practiced.

This month, in Afghanistan, students are officially returning to school and university. They'll return to buildings with no windows, no desks, no heat, no supplies—nothing. Yet the beginning of school is the end of a nightmare, especially for the girls. There is a heartbreaking hunger for learning in Afghanistan, where teachers forbidden to teach risked their lives to establish secret schools, including for girls who were specifically denied an education by Taliban edict. Most Afghani girls lost five years—irreplaceable learning years in the life



*Democracy
requires the free
flow of ideas.*

of a child. When the edict was lifted and the interim government announced its intention to re-start education for boys and girls, students flocked by the thousands to makeshift schools. The government expects to have over a million children back in school this year, and UNICEF, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other international agencies are working hard to rebuild the country's shattered educational infrastructure, from repairing broken windows to supplying desks, chairs, pencils, and books.

The tragic stories aren't limited to Afghanistan, and girls weren't the only victims. For example, many parents in Pakistan sent their boys to religious schools because much of the public education system there is also in a state of disarray. Instead of learning the "three Rs", these young people too often were educated to become Osama Bin Laden's foot soldiers. Now their families are grieving. The Pakistani government has vowed to rejuvenate public schools. We must help them.

Rebuild education

The United States should support programs that promote the dissemination of books, tapes, pamphlets, and model curricula, in schools and libraries and over the Internet, as an essential element of our defense spending. We and our allies should help the international agencies working to assist in the rebuilding of destroyed school buildings and furnish them with basic learning tools. We should support teachers and local efforts in education reform that include democratic ideas and subjects such as science, math, and economics that prepare children for life in a modern society. In Afghanistan, our assistance must be conditioned on the return of women and girls to the classroom, as teachers and as students, from primary school to university, as the interim government has promised.

There are courageous people, many of them teachers, working in every sort of repressive situation around the world to promote and sustain democratic ideas. Where there are openings to help schools and promote the free flow of ideas, the United States and its partners—who know first hand the value of the free exchange of ideas in teaching and learning—must act. It is a monumental task, and an essential one, if we hope to keep the world safe for democracy. ■

Where We Stand is published once every month in *The New Republic*. © Sandra Feldman 2002. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001. To see previous columns and access other resources, visit our web site at <http://www.aft.org>.

cannot win a war without national unity; his nightmare is a repetition of 1982, when Labor leaders joined Peace Now demonstrations and made the protest movement mainstream. Thanks to the unity government, Rabin Square has been virtually empty of demonstrators. The die-hard left can't rouse much rage against a government in which Shimon Peres is foreign minister—just as the settlers haven't been able to mobilize against a government headed by Sharon.

The second reason Sharon resists a knockout blow to the P.A. is his fear of interfering with an impending American attack on Iraq. According to a Sharon aide, the prime minister is convinced that such an attack is inevitable and that Israel should await the upheavals of a post-Saddam Middle East before launching irreversible initiatives—military or political. At his meeting with President Bush last month, Sharon was given the go-ahead to retaliate against the P.A., so long as he avoided harming Arafat personally or initiating other actions that would provoke regional escalation. Sharon accepted those conditions.

And so his goal now is to defeat the P.A. without actually destroying it and to encourage the emergence of those Palestinian leaders said to be uneasy about Arafat's open embrace of terrorism. And even as Sharon attacks, he insists he is ready to negotiate—though not under fire and not with Arafat.

BUT FOR ALL Sharon's maneuvering, he may not be able to hold the Israeli center together much longer. As the perception grows that Sharon lacks direction, the Israeli public is increasingly tempted by simplistic solutions. Some now speak of expelling the Palestinians—"NO ARABS, NO TERRORISM," reads one popular bumper sticker—though it is an expression of fury more than a blueprint for action. The left's demand for unilateral withdrawal from the territories is hardly more realistic: By revealing cracks in Israel's resolve, the left encourages Arafat's strategy of opting for terrorism over negotiations. One left-wing columnist actually suggested that Israel consider a "calculated surrender" to Arafat's "legitimate demands," testing whether that "will bring us closer to the end of the conflict."

Sharon now presides over an increasingly demoralized nation, a bitter irony for a man whose lifelong obsession has been to instill a fighting spirit among Israelis. The humiliations experienced by the army in the last three weeks—from the destruction of a Merkava tank in Gaza to the killing of seven soldiers and three civilians by a lone sniper with an antiquated rifle—recall the setbacks endured by the nascent Israeli army in the early 1950s. Then, a young officer named Arik Sharon emerged to head the anti-terrorist commando unit that became the army's model of initiative and daring. Now, though, the elderly leader of a military power is forced to concede the limits of force.

One possible danger of Sharon's lack of clear direction is that lunatics on the right will be tempted to emulate Dr. Baruch Goldstein, the settler who in 1994 murdered 29 Muslims during prayer in Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs. Indeed, the bombing of an Arab school in East Jerusalem—in apparent retaliation for the recent terrorist attack against

ultra-Orthodox Jews—could be an indication of worse to come. And a Jewish atrocity against Palestinians would almost certainly summon international pressure against Israel—perhaps even the insertion of foreign "observers" into the territories, fulfilling Arafat's fantasy of transforming Israel into Serbia in international perception.

It wasn't supposed to happen this way. During last year's election, Sharon promised peace and security. ("I feel secure with Sharon's peace," went the slogan.) It wasn't demagoguery: Sharon was prepared to be the Israeli prime minister on whose watch a sovereign Palestine emerged, and to concede that his long campaign to prevent a PLO state had failed. A Palestinian state, he argued, already existed in all but name; his mission would be to minimize the dangers of its inevitable birth. He called for a Palestinian state on the territories the P.A. already controlled, followed by a lengthy testing period, after which final borders would be negotiated. And while Sharon was offering substantially less than Ehud Barak had already put on the table, he thought the Palestinians might be tempted to accept the deal because he was demanding less in return—not an end to the conflict but merely a prolonged cease-fire.

But Sharon badly misread the Palestinians. According to recently released documents seized by the Israeli army from Orient House, the P.A.'s former headquarters in Jerusalem, the Palestinian leadership decided one year ago to bring down Sharon by intensifying terror attacks that would convince the Israeli public he was a failure. Arafat had already destroyed the political careers of two previous prime ministers, Peres and Barak. Now it's Sharon's turn. ■



Chuck Hagel, the Senate's newest wise man.

Pocket Protector

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

WHEN TOM DASCHLE questioned the scope of the war on terrorism last week, Trent Lott sandbagged him. But if Lott really means to badger politicians who dissent from President Bush's "axis of evil" line, he should swing by the office of his fellow Republican senator, Chuck Hagel. "I'd just as soon not have seen that in the [State of the Union] speech," the Nebraska senator complained about the axis formulation on February 3. Elaborating at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing two days later, Hagel warned, "[A]ctions and words have consequences that are very dangerous at a time in the history of man when there's little margin of error left." Lest the Bush team miss the point, he invoked the war in Vietnam, where Hagel himself was wounded and where the United States "got into something that we couldn't get out of. And it destroyed [Lyndon Johnson], destroyed his presidency, reshaped American politics and a generation."

The administration's tough talk on Iraq elicits a mixed response from Hagel. Although he claims to support regime change in Baghdad, he believes unilateral action against Iraq "would not only be dangerous, but... would open up a potential conflict in that area that could make things far, far worse and more unstable." (And, at a private meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan last month that was attended by nine senators, Hagel reportedly expressed doubts about the wisdom of current and possible future U.N. sanctions against Iraq.) Hagel wonders too about the effect placing Pyongyang on the "evil" roster may have on Seoul's outreach to the North. But these amount to minor irritants compared with his outrage over Tehran's inclusion. "Do we know that the Iranians have financed Hezbollah and other terrorist groups?" Hagel asked during an interview in his office last week. "Yes, we do. Are they still developing weapons of mass destruction? Yes, they are. But the question always is how do you influence that [behavior] best to change that. Not by lumping them into the 'axis of evil.'" So how does the senator from Nebraska propose we change the behavior of a country the United States labels "the most active state sponsor of terrorism"? His answer remains exactly what it was before September 11: Trade.

Hagel belongs to a familiar Washington breed. During the cold war, Capitol Hill overflowed with farm-state Kissingers like Lee Hamilton and Richard Lugar, whose stake in stable export markets coincided with the foreign policy establishment's distaste for anything that upset the global status quo. Former secretaries of state and national security advisers would whisper in their ears; tutor them in the complexities of the international scene; and persuade them that selling

stuff to dictators not only benefited their constituents, but also benefited mankind.

Hagel updated this model for the post-cold-war era. Elected to the Senate in 1996, he sought out an assignment on the Foreign Relations Committee and immediately waded into high-visibility debates over global warming, IMF funding, and sanctions. Along the way, he befriended such Bush père eminences as Brent Scowcroft, James Baker, and Colin Powell—all of whom Hagel still speaks with regularly. Before long the senator from Nebraska was peppering his speeches with references to Toynbee and Metternich, inveighing against America's tendency "to moralize to others," and insisting that trade fosters stability and democracy—especially in Iran, whose agricultural markets remained off-limits to American farmers.

The 1990s were an ideal time for such arguments. It was the era of geoeconomics and commercial diplomacy. Clinton administration Trade Representative Mickey Kantor declared: "The days when we could afford to subordinate our economic interests to foreign policy or defense concerns are long past." His boss suggested that we didn't need to choose, because economic and foreign policy interests were really the same thing. Indeed, the United States could build "peace through trade, investment, and commerce."

HAGEL, THE CO-FOUNDER of America's second-largest independent cell phone company, fervently preached the gospel. "The future for America, the future for growth, the future for our children, the future for our entitlement programs, the future for every part of our life is trade," Hagel declaimed last April. "Not only the economic dynamic is so anchored by trade, but also our security, geopolitical parts of the bigger equation of how we deal with our allies and adversaries in this still-unpredictable world." Hagel elaborated upon this theme in front of oil-industry-funded groups like the Iranian Trade Association and the American-Iranian Council (AIC) and at the 1999 US-Iranian Agricultural Conference. And he was one of only two senators (Lugar was the other) to vote last year against a five-year extension of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), a bill that threatens sanctions against foreign firms doing business with either country—and against which oil and agribusiness companies lobbied furiously.

September 11, needless to say, quieted the commercial diplomats. But in recent weeks Hagel has begun making the case again—serving as a kind of human trial balloon for the proposition that, war on terrorism or no war on terrorism, the United States should engage the foremost state sponsor of terrorism. As he put it last week, "When nations are trading... they are far less likely to go to war, they are far less likely to find dictators running the country." Hagel, indeed, has highlighted Tehran's "cooperation" in Afghanistan and declined at first to concede Iran's involvement in the *Karine A* arms shipment to the Palestinian Authority. He claims that "because of that 'axis of evil' statement" the United States may have retarded reform efforts in Iran; and, on March 13, he will address another conference about Iran, this one co-sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AIC. "It was not

helpful to have Iran included in that group [the axis of evil]," Hagel complained to the Associated Press. "I think it does not give Iran any incentive to try and act in a responsible way."

As it happens, Hagel's geopolitical interest in Iran neatly coincides with Nebraska's commercial interest in Iran. "The farmers, the ranchers, and the small-business people in Nebraska have understood foreign policy long before any fancy professors at Harvard figured it out—long before," Hagel argued in 1999. "And you know why? Not because they're any smarter, but because it was relevant, because they understood a long time ago that if you can't sell your corn, your beef, your pork, and your small-business products, that impacts every facet of your life." Hagel delivered this populist lesson at the annual meeting of The Trilateral Commission—in a room filled with Harvard alumni and presumably very few Nebraskans. But he could just as easily have given it in Omaha. In 2000, agricultural exports accounted for over one-third of the state's \$9 billion farm receipts—a figure Hagel tried to boost in 1999 by pressing for a waiver to export \$500 million worth of agricultural products to Tehran. And, according to Federal Election Commission filings and the Center for Responsive Politics, Hagel has received nearly \$500,000 dollars in agribusiness and energy-sector donations during his first term; in this election cycle he ranks as the Senate's fifth-largest recipient of oil and gas money. In fact, when it isn't in Nebraska's interest, Hagel's philosophical commitment to engagement tends to evaporate. In 1999, for example, he pressed the Clinton administration to imple-

ment even tougher sanctions than were already in place against European countries that banned imports of American beef treated with hormones.

There's nothing wrong with representing your constituents, of course. The press, however, often touts Hagel as a disinterested wise man—the calm voice of reason amidst a sea of gung-ho yahoos. (Just this week *The New York Times* cooed that he "has become a prominent voice on foreign policy.") But when it comes to Iran—particularly during our war against terrorism—America's political interest and Nebraska's commercial interests do not converge. Hagel argues that a policy of engagement will nudge Tehran toward reform. But it could just as easily create an American interest in maintaining Iran's political status quo. "When Clinton engaged Tehran," recalls Azar Nafisi, author of a forthcoming book about her experiences as a dissident in Iran, "there was much less vocal support in Washington for the students, intellectuals, and journalists who were truly fighting for reform." Nor is it necessarily true, as Hagel claims, that Iran-Libya sanctions "don't work, they've never worked, they won't work." Iran reported to the United Nations in 1998 that ILSA had "led to the disruption of the country's economic system," a "decline in its gross national product," and a "reduction in international investment." Between 1996, when ILSA was enacted, and 2001, Tehran promoted more than 50 foreign-investment opportunities in its energy sector but received only eight contracts, earning it barely half of what its tiny neighbor, Qatar, did during the same period. (It was also precisely during this



period that Iranian reform efforts gained strength.)

But even if commercial ties could be said to promote Iran's long-term democratization, rewarding a country the president has just declared "evil"—and that's now official policy—hardly furthers the wartime credibility to which Hagel attaches so much importance. As for his conviction that trade and war are all but incompatible, it should have been decisively put to rest 90 years ago at the Marne, and, besides, the Bush team isn't planning a war with Iran. It's merely upholding an existing policy—sanctions—that has allowed the United States to express its displeasure *without resorting to force*. And President Bush has added to it a valuable statement of moral disapprobation—one that, as Georgetown's Rob Sobhani has put it, "separated the nation of Iran from its oppressive government." Hagel says of America's foreign policy objectives, "It's very easy to make speeches, it's very easy to talk about high-minded morality and what our nation stands for— . . . But the hard part is how do we get there, and trade is one way to help us get there." So is talking about what our nation stands for. ■

The liberal roots of vouchers. Class Action

By JEFFREY ROSEN

THE SUPREME COURT is about to decide the constitutionality of school choice; but it is doing so with a peculiar blindness to the politics of school choice. In arguments on February 20, a majority of justices seemed to agree that Cleveland's voucher program would be constitutional if low-income parents had a meaningful range of schools—religious and secular, public and private—from which to choose. But the more skeptical justices worried that because nearby suburban public schools have chosen not to accept transfer students from the inner city, this meaningful range of choices does not exist. In fact, 96 percent of students in Cleveland's voucher program in 1999 were enrolled in religious schools.

There is something perverse about this objection. After all, there's a reason the Cleveland voucher program doesn't require the suburbs to participate: It's politically impossible. Ever since *Brown v. Board of Education*, efforts by the courts or legislatures to deal with racial segregation and funding disparities by coercing suburban schools into accepting inner-city students have sparked fierce suburban backlashes and ended in failure. Given these political realities, Cleveland's voucher system is far better than the alternatives. To strike it down because it fails to guarantee a range of choice that suburban resistance has made impossible would represent the kind of judicial activism the Court has already abandoned in school desegregation and school financing cases. A pragmatic court, on the other hand, would recognize that limited voucher programs offer the only realistic hope for

reconciling the politically unshakable principle of local autonomy with even a modicum of racial diversity and educational equality.

IN CLEVELAND, AND throughout the country, today's battles over school vouchers are inextricably connected to yesterday's battles over racial desegregation and equality of educational resources. In 1995, as part of a lawsuit filed 20 years earlier to desegregate Cleveland's public schools, a federal court put the school district under state control because it was failing to meet the state's minimal performance standards. In response, the Ohio legislature in 1997 adopted a voucher program that pays up to \$2,250 per year for low-income students from kindergarten through eighth grade to choose from a range of participating public and private schools. The legislature invited public schools in the Cleveland suburbs to participate and to receive yearly payments for accepting transfer students from the inner city. All the suburban schools declined the invitation.

This lack of enthusiasm was hardly a surprise. In a forthcoming article in the *Yale Law Journal*, James E. Ryan of the University of Virginia and Michael Heise of Case Western Reserve University argue that the resistance of suburban public schools has defined the politics of school choice for the last 50 years. "Suburbanites, by and large, are not wild about school choice, either public or private," they argue, because suburban parents generally like the schools their children attend and want to protect their physical and financial exclusivity against the threat of school choice. When courts have tried to coerce suburban parents into surrendering control over their schools, Ryan and Heise argue, suburban parents have fought back and won. After a few years of strenuous local resistance to court-ordered busing, for instance, the Supreme Court gave up: In 1974 it found that suburban schools couldn't be forced to alleviate racial segregation in the inner city. When inner-city parents tried a different strategy and argued that the inequalities of school financing between the suburbs and the inner cities violated the Constitution, the Supreme Court again rejected the claim, holding that transferring property taxes from the suburbs to the city undermined local autonomy.

Voucher plans were adopted largely as a last resort, an effort to guarantee a semblance of school choice for low-income minority students in failing inner-city schools. (And in this regard, although usually cast as a conservative idea, they have a liberal pedigree.) But when voucher plans threatened suburban autonomy, the suburbs fought back once more. According to Ryan and Heise, statewide voucher initiatives in California and elsewhere were defeated not primarily by teachers' unions but by Republican suburbanites. In Ohio, Wisconsin, and Florida—the three states that have adopted publicly funded voucher plans—liberal African American legislators won white Republican support in part because they restricted their efforts to inner-city families in failing schools without threatening the physical or financial independence of suburban schools. More ambitious plans would have represented political suicide.

In striking down Cleveland's voucher plan as a violation of the First Amendment's prohibition on establishment of reli-

gion, the federal appeals court refused to acknowledge this political reality. Instead it focused on the fact that, in 1999, 96 percent of students participating in the voucher program were enrolled in sectarian schools. But, as a legal matter, the precise mix of religious and nonreligious schools shouldn't matter: The Supreme Court has held that the state can offer money to religious and secular institutions on equal terms as long as the private choices of individual recipients, rather than public incentives offered by the state, determine the ultimate destination of the funds.

If only one or two secular schools participated in the voucher program, one could argue about whether Cleveland parents enjoyed a meaningful choice. But in Cleveland, as in Milwaukee, the mix of schools—public and private, secular and religious—can change quickly in response to financial incentives offered by the state. In Milwaukee the number of secular private schools participating in the voucher program more than tripled from 7 in 1990 to 23 in 1998, serving 30 percent of the choice students. Even if the suburbs remain intransigent, as they did in Milwaukee, there's no reason not to expect a similar expansion of participation by secular private schools in Cleveland if vouchers are allowed to take root. Indeed, when Cleveland's voucher program began, it included two secular private schools that educated 15 percent of all the voucher students. But when the state offered roughly twice as much to students in charter schools than to students in the voucher programs, these private schools reorganized themselves as public charter schools.

It's arguable, therefore, that the range of choices among secular schools in Cleveland is already much wider than the federal appeals court acknowledged in its ruling. During last month's oral arguments at the Supreme Court, the central question was whether the appeals court had made a mistake by refusing to include these public charter schools—also known as community schools—in the range of choices available to Cleveland parents. The court had done this because the charter schools receive money directly from the state rather than from vouchers given to parents. But, as Justice Sandra Day O'Connor suggested, it seems odd not to count the charter and magnet schools among the range of choices in Cleveland, since they—like the voucher-eligible schools—will receive more or less state funding based on the number of students they attract. "Don't we have to look at the full range of choices, community schools and magnet schools," asked O'Connor impatiently. "If you want to look at what parents' choices are, don't you have to look at the whole program?" As it turns out, when community schools and magnet schools are counted, more than 37 percent of Cleveland parents who used direct or indirect state aid to opt out of public schools in 1999 chose nonreligious schools.

IF OHIO WERE utopia, the state would have done more to increase the range of school choice. It could have set the voucher limits higher so they were easier to use at more expensive, secular private schools. Ohio could have followed Milwaukee's example and allowed voucher students who attend parochial schools to opt out of religious activities. Or Ohio could have required suburban schools to participate in the voucher program,

abandoning the principle of local autonomy. But efforts to increase the voucher amount have stalled in the Ohio legislature because of concerns about expense; the opt-out option seems to have been overlooked; and a proposal to require suburban schools to participate in the voucher program never would have passed. Ohio is not utopia, and the Supreme Court shouldn't impose choice requirements so arduous that no state can actually meet them.

Nor should it impose the even higher standards that Justice Stephen Breyer suggested. He wondered whether the religious and public schools were sufficiently equal in quality to give parents a meaningful choice. Breyer suggested that if the Catholic private schools were better than the secular alternatives, he would feel pressure to send his children there, even if he weren't a Catholic. "The irony is that the better parochial school is, in a sense the less freedom of choice," said Breyer. "If it was my children, I would say, 'I want the best education. Do I want them to learn religion? Frankly not; it's not my religion.'" This objection is hard to fathom: If Catholic schools are indeed the best alternative, non-Catholic parents would feel the same pressure to choose them, whether or not they were part of a voucher program, and whether or not (like Breyer) they could afford more expensive alternatives.

Breyer is the Court's leading pragmatist, but it would be distinctly unpragmatic to strike down the voucher program because Cleveland, at this moment, fails to offer religious and nonreligious schools of precisely equal quality. Real educational equality has proved impossible to achieve, which is why the Court stopped demanding it in desegregation and school financing cases. It would be even less pragmatic to strike down the Cleveland program unless the suburbs participate. The refusal of the suburbs to participate in desegregation efforts is what led to the voucher program in the first place, and, if the program succeeds, voucher advocates hope the suburban schools might eventually change their minds about participating, as they did under the METCO plan in Boston. (METCO began as a small, voluntary desegregation plan in the 1960s; now, close to 40 suburbs accept more than 3,000 inner-city students per year who are bussed in to attend their schools.) Finally, Breyer has staked his jurisprudence on the importance of deferring to legislatures and allowing them to experiment with a variety of solutions to complicated social problems. To strike down fledgling voucher programs in the name of an abstract and unrealistic ideal of equality would be the antithesis of judicial modesty.

"It is one of the happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country," wrote Breyer's hero, Justice Louis Brandeis. There is little risk that upholding the modest voucher programs in Cleveland, Wisconsin, and Florida will threaten the constitutional principle of religious neutrality. And there's a real chance that, as voucher programs develop for inner-city students, they will lead to more school choice and more racial and religious diversity at the same time. Fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, that's a combination no other legal or political strategy has managed to achieve. ■

ANTI-SEMITISM. It's not a HISTORY LESSON. It's a CURRENT EVENT.

Part I. The New Global Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism, the oldest form of hatred, has now moved into a somewhat alarming new global phase crossing boundaries of every type — geographical, national, political, religious and cultural.

There is an ideological coalition of anti-Jewish sentiment that is inter-connecting globally. We see it in the proliferation in the Arab media of vicious Nazi-like stereotyping of Jews, conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial. Its messages of hate influence Muslim immigrants in France to commit daily anti-Jewish acts. It overpowers a conference on racism in Durban with anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish resolutions and statements.

And the Internet has given free access to the hatemongers in the U.S. to cross-pollinate with anti-Semites globally to spread their venom of hate on a scale never before possible.

The Anti-Defamation League will meet the challenges head-on and we urge you to help us meet them. For more information visit www.adl.org.

Glen A. Tobias, National Chairman Abraham H. Foxman, National Director
Anti-Defamation League, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017



The contradictions of conservative media criticism.

Victim Politics

By JONATHAN CHAIT

EVERY POLITICAL MOVEMENT benefits from nurturing in its adherents the sense that powerful interests are arrayed against them. For American liberals, this is relatively straightforward. As they traditionally represent the economically weak, they regularly find themselves opposed by the economically powerful. American conservatives come to their persecution complex less naturally, particularly given their political ascendancy over the past 20 years. And yet, even with lavish industry bankrolling of their ideas and control of the White House, Supreme Court, and half of Congress, conservatives still generally see themselves as underdogs. The bugaboo that most enables this belief is the notion that the media systematically slants news coverage to the left.

Liberal media bias occupies a cherished space within the conservative psyche, and every GOP standard-bearer in the last decade has taken it up. The first President Bush made it a sort of motto in 1992—"ANNOY THE MEDIA, RE-ELECT BUSH" read a popular bumper sticker embraced by the candidate. Newt Gingrich railed that "the bias of the elite media" amounted to "a passive conspiracy" to help Bill Clinton; Bob Dole charged that reporters apply "a double standard" to Republican and Democratic candidates because "they just can't help but see the world through liberal-colored glasses." Even George W. Bush, who has enjoyed largely convivial relations with the press, recently paraded before reporters toting a copy of *Bias*—former CBS reporter Bernard Goldberg's memoir-cum-exposé about the leftward slant of televised news—which has unexpectedly risen to number one on *The New York Times* best-seller list.

The commercial success of *Bias* has propelled the debate over liberal bias beyond the conservative press, where it has bubbled for decades, and given it new credence. Among conservatives, *Bias* has not advanced a new understanding of the media so much as confirmed an old one. On the right, liberal media bias is considered a settled question. "There are certain facts of life so long obvious they would seem beyond dispute," explained a recent *Wall Street Journal* editorial. "One of these—that there is a liberal tilt in the media... continues to provoke hot denials and even rage." Goldberg's role in the conservative case against the media is as an eyewitness for the prosecution. His indictment is that members of the media are so uniformly liberal that they "can't recognize their own bias" and will ruthlessly persecute anybody who dares speak the truth. "Taking on the media elites," he writes melodramatically, "is a sin. A mortal sin."

There are any number of ways one might test Goldberg's hypothesis. But for the sake of argument, let us consider

media coverage of *Bias* itself. If Goldberg's claims—about the media's hostility to conservative views in general and to criticism of the media in particular—are true, one would expect the press to have greeted *Bias* with extreme animosity. But nothing of the sort has happened. As Goldberg himself acknowledged on one of his many book-touting appearances on FOX NEWS, "I would say ninety percent of what I've heard and read about the book has been positive." Even the review of *Bias* in *The New York Times*—an organ that figures prominently in the demonology of conservative media analysis—declares: "'Bias' should be taken seriously." The book splashes this quote across the top of its cover, apparently oblivious to the refutation of its own thesis.

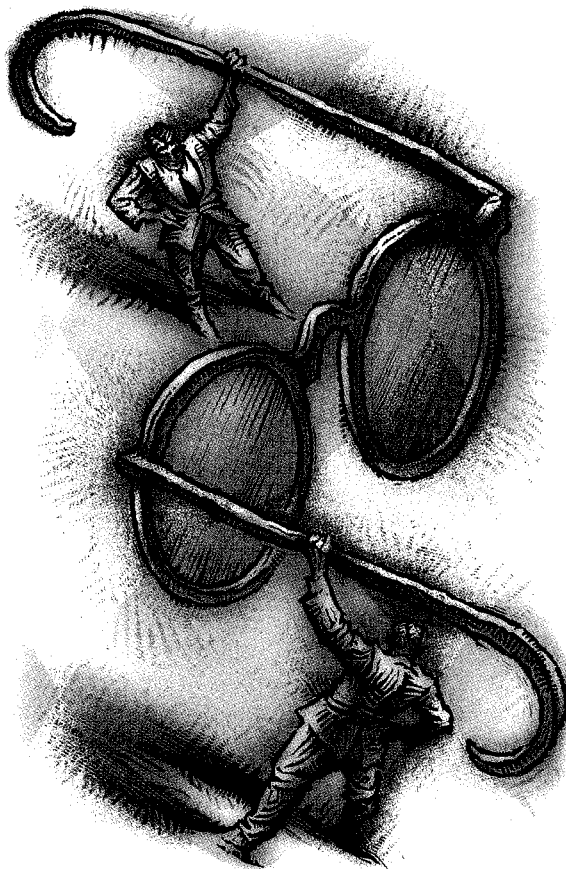
A similar paradox applies to the book's most sensational bit of evidence: a conversation that Goldberg claims to have had with CBS NEWS President Andrew Heyward in which the latter confessed, "of course there's a liberal bias in the news," but warned the author: "[i]f you repeat any of this, I'll deny it." This divulgence is treated as a smoking gun—confirmation of bias from a leading member of the liberal media himself! The same dynamic gives Goldberg's own testimony more credibility, and the subtitle of *Bias* ("A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News") plays upon this notion. But it's hardly new for journalists to denounce their profession's bias—indeed, he recycles several old quotes from nonconservative reporters making the same point. And ultimately these confessions don't bolster Goldberg's argument; they undermine it. His contention, remember, is that journalists are so ideologically insular that they "can't recognize their own bias." By this logic, the best evidence of liberal bias would be reporters denying it or even suspecting themselves of conservative bias. (*National Review*'s Ramesh Ponnuru suggested this phenomenon in 2000, writing that "the press is just sympathetic enough to [Al] Gore to convince itself that it's biased against him.") Goldberg and his conservative admirers want it both ways: If journalists admit liberal bias, they prove the charge correct. If journalists deny liberal bias, they prove they're too ideologically blinkered to see the truth, further confirming their bias.

This sort of nonfalsifiability is the great affliction of media criticism. Often it's simply impossible to separate one's views about bias from one's views about the underlying subject matter. Do you think the media's coverage of the Whitewater scandal exhibited an anti-Clinton bias? Your answer to that question almost certainly depends upon whether you think Whitewater was much ado about nothing or genuinely scandalous—which, in turn, almost certainly depends on your opinion of President Clinton. It's easy, then, to fall into

the epistemological trap of interpreting every news story that jibes with your ideology as obviously true and every story that doesn't as evidence of media bias. This isn't to say that everything is relative and that determining what constitutes prejudicial news is impossible. The point is that making judgments about media bias requires an Olympian detachment from one's own perspective.

Alas, it is this very quality that Goldberg most obviously lacks. His account of his tenure at CBS is comically bereft of self-awareness. In Goldberg's telling, his ordeal began when he wrote an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* attacking as biased a CBS segment on then-presidential candidate Steve Forbes and the flat tax. Obviously, no organization appreciates having one of its employees publicly impugn its integrity. Yet Goldberg recounts every heated conversation, every aversion of his colleagues' eyes, in the shocked and outraged tones of a man who has barely survived some Upper West Side gulag. (It's worth noting that after his op-ed Goldberg actually remained at CBS for several years without any reduction in salary.) Goldberg apparently feels he can publicly accuse his colleagues of violating the most basic journalistic principles but feels they have no right to take umbrage, even in private. Without irony, though, he declares them "thin-skinned celebrity journalists who can dish it out . . . but can't take it."

Goldberg describes how he tried to mollify Heyward by pointing out that, in his op-ed, he had not revealed the private conversation in which Heyward allegedly concurred with his views on bias. Goldberg records Heyward's reaction, using italics for emphasis: "*That would have been like raping my wife and kidnapping my kids!*" he screamed at me." Goldberg lingers over the phrase, repeating it five times throughout the book, each instance in italics. "Writing an op-ed piece was like *raping his wife and kidnapping his kids*," he recounts—somewhat distorting the view of Heyward, who was describing something Goldberg had *not* done. "Criticizing, publicly, what I saw as bias in network news was like *raping his wife and kidnapping his kids*." You might conclude from this passage that Goldberg has a severe aversion to hyperbolic analogies, even those uttered in extemporaneous anger. But the first few chapters of his book are largely a series of, well, hyperbolic analogies, in which he compares CBS NEWS to, alternatively, the Soviet Union, the Mafia, and a prison in which the producers and vice presidents are "Dan [Rather]'s bitches." Even in his own account, Goldberg comes off as a man utterly unable to apply a consistent set of rules to himself and others.



None of which is to say that Goldberg is wrong when he says the media is biased. But that bias isn't monolithic. It comes in various forms, not all of them liberal. The trouble is that conservatives, who dominate the world of ideological media criticism, don't usually distinguish between biased reporting and reporting that contradicts their views. And they don't usually distinguish between stories that are ideologically biased against conservatives and stories that are biased for other reasons. Take Goldberg's strongest evidence of liberal bias in the news—Eric Engberg's February 1996 CBS NEWS segment on the flat tax, which launched Goldberg's career as a media critic. Goldberg is right that the incident provides an object lesson in media bias; it's just not the bias he imagines.

As Goldberg notes, the segment's entire tone was critical, but not vehemently so until the very end, when Engberg declared, "Forbes's number-one wackiest flat-tax promise," then cut to Forbes proclaiming: "Parents would have more time to spend with their children and each other." There are basically two questions here—one of tone and one of content. Let's take the latter first. As Goldberg sees it, Forbes's claim deserved to be taken seriously. "[W]hat Forbes meant," he writes, "is that since many Americans—not just the wealthy—would pay less tax under his plan, they might not have to work as many hours." In other words, Goldberg argues that Forbes's promise, regardless of its truth, was at least logically consistent. But it wasn't. The entire rationale of the candidate's flat tax was that it would cause an economic boom by inspiring Americans to work *more*. If it caused people to work less, then it would reduce, rather than increase, economic growth. Even by Forbes's own logic, then, this promise was transparently silly.

On tone, however, Goldberg is right that Engberg's segment was not straight in the usual "Candidate Smith says X, but Candidate Jones says Y" sense. What does this mean? Goldberg, unsurprisingly, sees partisan bias. "There is absolutely no way," he writes, "that Engberg or Rather would have aired a flat-tax story with that same contemptuous tone if Teddy Kennedy or Hillary Clinton had come up with the idea." But remember, in February 1996 Forbes was running in the GOP primary against the chosen candidate of the party establishment, Bob Dole, and at the time many Republicans (including Gingrich) were attacking the flat tax as nonsensical and a sop to the rich. The candidate who most benefited from the segment, then, was Dole.

What allowed CBS (and the media generally) to treat Forbes's flat-tax plan so harshly, then, was the fact that the

proposal was controversial *even within the GOP*. One of the guiding conventions of political journalism is that criticism is legitimized when it comes from within a politician's party as well as from the other party. For instance, the media started describing Clinton's dalliance with Monica Lewinsky as an important moral transgression once Democrats acknowledged it.

Had Forbes somehow become the GOP nominee, however, a segment like Engberg's almost certainly could not have run. This is because, for the mainstream media, being even-handed usually means treating respectfully the reigning view in each party. And while this ethos does represent a kind of bias, it's not exactly a liberal one. One consequence of this bias, as I've written in these pages before, is that the press feels obliged to take seriously even those policy claims that are empirically false. Last year, for instance, nonpartisan calculations showed that about 40 percent of Bush's tax cut went to the highest-earning 1 percent of taxpayers. To counter this, Republicans released a competing estimate, claiming the figure was only 22 percent. But they arrived at this number by explicitly excluding from their calculations those parts of the tax cut—the upper-bracket cuts and repeal of the estate tax—that most benefited the rich. In other words, the GOP figure was objectively and deliberately wrong in ways that were easy to comprehend and explain. Rather than point this out, though, the press generally treated both numbers as equally valid. As *The New York Times* reported, “the richest 1 percent of taxpayers would get between 22 percent and 45 percent of the tax benefits, depending on how the calculations are done.”

A related media bias—which is likewise often mistaken for partisan inclination—is toward ratifying the stereotypes that already exist about each party and its candidates. During the 2000 campaign, for instance, *National Review's* Jonah Goldberg (no relation) compared then-Governor Bush's execution of a murderer, which received widespread media attention, with a similar execution by Clinton eight years before, which received far less coverage. The discrepancy, he argued, proved liberal media bias. But a more plausible explanation is that it reflected the media's bias toward the established story line: Bush's rivals were accusing him of excessive fondness for the death penalty, while Clinton's, by and large, were not. The same dynamic worked in Bush's favor later in the campaign. In the fall of 2000, reporters jumped all over Gore for making factual misstatements—a shift in news coverage that precipitated Bush's comeback in the polls—while ignoring various factual misstatements by Bush. Again, this didn't reflect bias but rather adherence to a familiar script. The rap on Gore was dishonesty, so reporters seized upon his falsehoods. Similarly, the rap on Bush was stupidity; when he flubbed an impromptu quiz of world leaders in 1999, it was considered news. This sort of media bias is maddeningly insipid, but in an equal-opportunity way. It is the reason we invariably see more stories about poverty and environmental despoliation during Republican administrations, and more stories about government bloat and military unpreparedness during Democratic ones.

When Goldberg goes beyond his first-person observations at CBS, his media analysis becomes even more simplistic. In

fact, he does little more than recycle long-standing conservative complaints. He notes, for instance, that news accounts describe Republicans as “right-wing” far more than they call Democrats “left-wing.” This may sound like a perfectly impartial objection—mustn't there be as many left-wingers in American politics as right-wingers? If you consider Clinton a leftist, as many conservatives do, then the answer is yes. But the center of American politics has moved rightward over the last 25 years. By historical standards—not to mention the standards of other democracies—American liberals today are rather conservative. Clinton was probably further to the right on domestic policy than Richard Nixon, and he was almost certainly further to the right than European conservatives such as Helmut Kohl and Jacques Chirac. So from these broader perspectives, it's entirely natural that reporters would label more contemporary American politicians “right-wing” than “left-wing.”

This same rightward drift has made liberalism less fashionable. So, over the last decade, major newspapers have used the pejorative phrase “unreconstructed liberal” more than five times as often as they've used “unreconstructed conservative.” Why isn't this disparity evidence of anti-liberal bias? For basically the same reason Goldberg's example isn't. Reporters are more likely to call liberals “unreconstructed” not because they consider liberalism out of date, but because in recent years liberals have indeed felt the need to reconstruct themselves more than conservatives have.

To be fair, Goldberg does occasionally venture beyond conservative conventional wisdom about media bias. The problem is that when he does, he generally undermines his main argument. For instance, he devotes a significant chunk of his book to discussing how network news departments twist their coverage to protect their parent corporations' bottom line—NBC, for instance, buried unflattering news about General Electric. But Goldberg never acknowledges that these constitute examples of *conservative* bias.

Another bias that Goldberg repeatedly notes stems from the crass imperative for commercial success. Ratings, he writes—again, apparently without recognition that he is undermining his thesis—are “the reason television people do almost everything.” But if networks care only about ratings, why do they risk their profits by offending the political views of their audience? Indeed, in a free market, how could an overwhelmingly liberal media even exist? Even though the conservative FOX NEWS network has increased its share in recent years, “liberal” networks like ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC still control the bulk of the TV news market and “liberal” newspapers the bulk of the newspaper market. If you believe that the media tilt left, then you must either believe that the public has no objection to this slant, or that the news business is unaffected by the forces of supply and demand.

TO AVOID SUCH sticky questions, most conservatives ignore the political inclinations of both media owners and media consumers, and concentrate instead on the biases of reporters and editors. And here the right has its strongest case. Reporters, as numerous studies have established, overwhelmingly vote for Democrats. The most famous survey,

taken after the 1992 elections, found that 89 percent of Washington journalists had voted for Clinton, 7 percent for Bush père, and only 2 percent for Ross Perot (as compared with 43, 37, and 19 percent, respectively, for the voters at large).

But this doesn't prove quite as much as one might suspect. Reporters may hold liberal views, but not on everything. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, a left-wing media watchdog, polled Washington journalists and compared the results with those of the public. It found that, while reporters generally hold more liberal views on social issues, they often take more conservative stances on economic questions. The public was far more likely than were media elites to think that Clinton's tax hike for the wealthy didn't go far enough and that the government should guarantee medical care. Reporters were far more inclined to support free trade and cutting entitlement programs.

This should come as no surprise. The views of the Beltway press reflect the ideology of the socioeconomic stratum in which they reside: secular, educated, urban or suburban, liberal on the environment and social issues, moderately conservative on economics. Indeed, the greatest statistical discrepancy in the 1992 voting pattern is not Washington reporters' lack of support for Bush, but their lack of support for Perot—they were one-fifth as likely as the public to cast a ballot for the GOP candidate, but only one-tenth as likely to support the Texas billionaire. Perot, of course, appealed to the disaffected working class, railing against free trade and immigration. Naturally, this brand of populism held little appeal for the media elite.

Reporters and pundits express their prejudices by classifying socially liberal, economically conservative positions as "centrist" or "moderate." Often this comes in the guise of bland horse-race analysis. How many times have you read in the news that Republicans succeed only when they eschew "divisive social issues"? "Divisive" social issues include even those, like school prayer and affirmative action, on which polls show wide majorities siding with the conservative position. Likewise, on many economic questions, the mainstream press habitually adopts conservative lingo, deriding efforts at redistribution of wealth as "class warfare" and defenses of retirement programs as "demagoguery."

Thus reporters define Republican Christine Todd Whitman—who dissents from GOP dogma on abortion and the environment—as a moderate, but they define Gary Bauer—who dissents on Social Security privatization and the minimum wage—as a hard-core ideologue. During the 2000 election *Newsweek* did a profile of a classic "swing voter" in Michigan. Even though she described herself as a pro-life Catholic who favored a more activist government, the article still proceeded to describe her as the prototype "fiscally conservative, socially moderate" swing voter—as if the trope were preprogrammed into *Newsweek's* word processors.

On the whole, this set of biases disproportionately benefits Democrats and liberals. The media's aversion to the cultural right is more pronounced than its aversion to the economic left, and, since reporters tend to label politicians according to their social views, they're more apt to consider Democrats moderate. This is the kernel of truth underlying Goldberg's hyperbolic screed.

But there are two important caveats. First, the professional constraints and institutional tendencies of political journalism—which value neutrality, tend to follow compelling story lines, and place a premium on maintaining good sources within both parties—often overwhelm reporters' ideological predilections. Second, conservative Republicans who understand these predilections can turn them to their own advantage. The recent revelation that the 2000 Bush presidential campaign kept Ralph Reed off its payroll is instructive: The reason, according to the *Times*, was that associating Bush too publicly with a former director of the Christian Coalition would complicate his efforts to portray himself as a "compassionate conservative." Bush's advisers understood that reporters would gauge his moderation largely by his distance from social conservatives. (They also no doubt understood that retaining Larry Lindsey, a fervent supply-sider, as his main economic adviser would set off no such alarms in the press.)

BUSH OUTLINED HIS plan to handle the press in a 1999 interview with *National Review*. "I do think [the media] are biased against conservative thought," he said in a forum that received little attention outside the right. "And the reason is that they think conservative thinkers are not compassionate people. And that's one of the reasons I've attached a moniker to the philosophy that I espouse, because I want people to hear a different message." As the Bush campaign understood, reporters are predisposed to seeing conservatives as temperamentally mean-spirited—an idiotic notion (think of Ronald Reagan or Jack Kemp), but a deeply rooted one nonetheless. Therefore, they viewed Bush's cheerful demeanor and apparent affinity for the poor as evidence that he was not all that conservative, and this conclusion permeated coverage of the entire campaign.

During the presidential debates, for instance, moderator Jim Lehrer twice asserted that both candidates shared essentially identical views on domestic issues. "As a practical matter, both of you want to bring prescription drugs to seniors, correct?" he said in the first debate. "[W]ould you agree that the two of you agree on a national patients' bill of rights?" he said in the last. In fact, the two candidates held very different views on these two issues, with Gore supporting popular legislative initiatives, and Bush—who opposed those initiatives—working like mad to pretend that he didn't. Essentially, Lehrer made Bush's case for him, and when Gore tried to lay out the differences (remember the Dingell-Norwood guffaws?), he came across as niggling and disputatious. It's not that Lehrer tried to help Bush—he merely represented the consensus among the chattering classes. The fact that the media depicted Bush as representing a break from the conservatism of the congressional Republicans was essential to his election.

It is ironic, then, that at this moment in history, a book alleging liberal media bias would top the best-seller list. And more ironic still that Bush would give it his tacit endorsement. Conservatives like Goldberg may believe that he overcame the systematic liberal bias of a hostile media, but Bush, surely, knows better. ■

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Truth of Form

ALL GREAT PLAYS suffer in some measure when adapted for film, because they are great *plays*, but Chekhov's plays suffer more than most. Of all great dramatists, Chekhov is one of the least amenable to screen adaptation. He often seems to be one of the easiest: he seems so modern, in many ways so immediate. But in terms of form and concept, he is more distant from film than many other dramatists, even some earlier ones.

Michael Cacoyannis is the latest to undertake the Chekhovian transfer with **The Cherry Orchard** (Kino International). This Greek director has been absent from the screen and the American stage for many years, but long ago he did much honorable work: films in Greece, Greek classics Off-Broadway, the film of *Zorba the Greek*, and more. One might think that if a Chekhov play was to be filmed, Cacoyannis (now in his seventies) was as likely an adapter-director as could be.

But Chekhov resists, simply by being what he is—a unique dramatist. The largest difficulty with *The Cherry Orchard* is that, like all his major plays, it was conceived in four acts. This is not, for Chekhov, a typographical arrangement or a theater convenience: it is absolutely integral to his work. Most plays are written in acts that the author uses as building blocks; only a few dramatists conceive those acts doubly—as building blocks, certainly, but also as entities in themselves, burnished and whole, even though they are parts of a larger work. For Chekhov, to whom form is not constraint but beauty, the theater presented the chance to create a work in separate yet cumulative entities. For such authors—and Chekhov is prime among them—the acts of a play are like movements of a symphony, whole in themselves yet cumulative. *The Cherry Orchard* is not divided into four acts, it is an organism built of four related organisms. “The structure of each act,” says Francis Fergusson, “is based upon a more or less social occasion.” Each of those occasions is the armature of the act, separate from but preceding or following other social occasions.

A film cannot solve this four-act problem merely by inserting three intermissions along the way, because film adapters usually feel there must be rearrangements of the material and interpolations. The result, as in this *Cherry Orchard*, is like playing a symphony with its four movements intermingled a bit and with some riffs added. For me, the only truly successful film of a Chekhov play is Louis Malle's *Vanya on 42nd Street*. This is not only because Malle filmed a theater production of *Vanya* that Andre Gregory and his ensemble had been working on for five years—yes, five years—but because the film is not an adaptation. It is Gregory's theater production dexterously photographed, with the play's architecture emphasized by brief intermissions. Free of the stilting that theater-on-film often entails, Chekhov's play, as a play, courses through a film channel; and the result is transfiguring.

Malle's comprehension of form gives his film a rare depth: it enters the most profound mystery of Chekhov, which is open to good theater productions of his plays but eludes most films of them. Three elements compose this mystery. First, there is what we see and hear, the action—life in all its currents and colors that flow before us. This flow discloses the subtext beneath the action, the large theme or themes of the play. And beyond that subtext, we come to a stillness. Absolute stillness. The text and the subtext, as sculpted in four sections by the author, ultimately lead to a quiet at the center of the whirlpool, a halting of breath, an immobile purity, a fixing of melancholy, a whisper of mortality. Without the shape of the play as Chekhov shaped it, this stillness is out of reach.

In *The Cherry Orchard*, he used a unique device to emphasize this stillness. In Act Two, most of the characters are lounging in a meadow at the edge of the orchard. They fall comfortably silent. Here is Chekhov's next stage direction, in Ann Dunnigan's translation: “All sit lost in thought.... Suddenly a distant sound is heard, as if from the sky, like the sound of a snapped string mournfully dying away.” They all wonder what that sound

was: several of them guess at it. (Cacoyannis doesn't use a snapped string; he puts in a distant rumble like a jet plane high above, so the various guesses don't remotely apply.) For me, that distant sound, never really explained, is Chekhov's means of underscoring the play's central stillness—not the momentary silence of these characters but the play's crystalline core. Since the film is never near this core, that mysterious sound underscores nothing and is irrelevant.

Quite in disregard of Chekhov's design, Cacoyannis's adaptation frequently bows to the supposed gods of screen adaptation. For first instance, though the play is utterly Russian—about the sale of an estate in Russia and the complex meanings of that sale—the film begins in Paris. Anya, the daughter of Madame Ranevskaya, the estate's owner, has gone there to bring her extravagant mother home. In Act One of the play itself, all of which takes place on the estate, Anya tells us that she made this trip; but Cacoyannis “opens up” the play by beginning in Paris. This attempted flexing into cinematic form breaches the enclosure of place, of specific place, that Chekhov intended. (Theatrically speaking, it also injures Ranevskaya's entrance. In the film we first see her sitting in her Paris attic, amid friends, placid. In the play we first see her returning to her home after a five-year absence, savoring her return both truthfully and histrionically.) This alteration also ignores a basic aesthetic difference between film and theater. Film ventures forth, finding and following action. In the theater, the action arrives: the theater does not go looking for it. For Chekhov, this theater principle is essential.

Another instance. In Act Three, as Chekhov planned it, Ranevskaya is giving a party that she can ill afford, at the same time that elsewhere her estate is being put up at auction. Again Cacoyannis cannot resist the temptation to cinematicize: he intercuts these simultaneous events. Thus the quasi-suicidal bustle of the party is interrupted, and when the affluent peasant Lopakhin breaks into the party to announce that he has bought the place, the impact of his announcement is diminished.

A paradox, an additional pity, clings to this film: most of the actors are exceptionally good. Charlotte Rampling, blossoming in mid-career, decks Ranevskaya with nobility and with a profligacy that belongs to the past. Alan Bates, another actor who keeps growing, plays Gaev, her lazy, endearing brother, dispensing elegance and kindly imperception. Katrin

Cartlidge, as Ranevskaya's adopted daughter, gives tacit pain to a frustrated marriage. As the student Trofimov, who came to the estate to tutor Ranevskaya's son and stays around after the boy's death, Andrew Howard amply provides the fire with which his character sees the future. Owen Teale is Lopakhin, the peasant who was not even allowed in the kitchen when he was a boy and who now owns the place. The tearful-joyful outburst in which he announces his purchase is one of the pinnacles of dramatic literature; Teale almost attains it. (My measure of Lopakhin is James Earl Jones, who was superb in an all-black production of the play in 1972.) Of the capable others, I note only Michael Gough, who, after being Batman's valet, turns up here as another valet, doddering old Feers, who is forgotten at the end when everyone else moves on.

With this cast and even with this adap-

tation, Cacoyannis could have done better. Chekhov called his play a comedy—in my view, he insisted on this point because he wanted to prod Stanislavsky, the director of the premiere, to keep things moving. Says Simon Karlinsky: "Above all [Chekhov] feared the slow and mournful tempo he knew Stanislavsky would try to achieve." With Cacoyannis, the phrase "slow and mournful" is almost vivacious. The pauses, the slow pick-up of cues, are examples of what is often assumed to be Chekhovian style but is only a facile dolor that hurts the work's true gravity.

Postscript. I must add that the difficulties mentioned above apply only to Chekhov's plays. The stories, for formal reasons, are much more congenial to the screen. One of the most beautiful films that I know is Josef Heifitz's adaptation of *The Lady with the Little Dog*, made in the Soviet Union in 1959. ■

first place. I say this with profound respect for Kushner's talents. He is one of the very few dramatists now writing whose works are contributions to literature as well as to theater. (Stoppard is only a pretender to that crown.) What he lacks at present is not substance, eloquence, intelligence, or emotional power—he has those qualities in abundance, along with the Orwellian gift of being able to take the spiritual temperature of a people with a political thermometer.

Where Kushner falls short is in his formal control. Distracted by too many subjects at once, he often suffers from a divided focus. Beginning with the epic *Angels in America*, Kushner's plays have tended to be sprawling extravaganzas that suffer not so much from a deficit of sensibility as from a surplus of it. They display the literary equivalent of overacting: overwriting. (*Homebody/Kabul* is almost four hours long.) Kushner is one of the few playwrights who publicly acknowledge and even seem to advertise a need for a dramaturg—the current production boasts two.

Yet his material is still sorely in need of dramaturgical attention. As its odd title suggests, this is a bifurcated work in which the second part bears only a tangential relation to the first. What links them is a character, the Homebody, though by the time we get to Kabul she is just a hovering memory, having disappeared into the city after being brutally murdered and dismembered between the acts. (That is one explanation of how she vanished—Kushner provides some others.) Fully realized in the monologue that begins the play, she evaporates into a subject for regret and remorse in the longer section that ends it, which is far more preoccupied with a disintegrating family (widowed father and raging daughter) in an exotic country, losing their innocence among con men, junkies, fanatics, poets, and brutal despots.

This makes the opening monologue a bit of a tease—rather like the killing of Janet Leigh twenty minutes into *Psycho*. Finishing off the Homebody takes somewhat longer (her monologue lasts about an hour). But for the time that she is with us, she is an entirely winning presence. I suspect that this inveterate tourist was largely inspired by Mrs. Moore in *A Passage to India*, though there are echoes of the ruminating matrons of Virginia Woolf and perhaps the loquacious Violet Venable of Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*. A bit dotty, as infatuated with travel as she is intoxicated with language, the Homebody addresses

Robert Brustein on Theater Angels in Afghanistan

TONY KUSHNER MAY be the luckiest and the unluckiest dramatist in town. Having had the foresight to write a play about Afghanistan before the September 11 attacks, he opened it last December, with America's presence in the area still dominating the front pages. That was the lucky part. It was also the unlucky part. The destruction of the World Trade Center and America's subsequent pursuit of the Taliban and Al Qaeda has radically altered our consciousness about that country in a way that no prophet could have possibly foreseen.

As a result, *Homebody/Kabul*, which recently completed a run at the New York Theatre Workshop, is a schizophrenic entity, at the same time relevant to the point of prescience and woefully out-of-date. Most of the play takes place in Kabul in 1998, and includes references to "another U.S. bombing" (of the terrorist camp at Khost) and how it missed Osama bin Laden and killed a number of innocents. But Kushner's account of a British

father and daughter searching for a family member who disappeared after a tourist trip to Kabul seems particularly inconsequential against the background of the cataclysmic political events that have since transpired.

I saw the play twice, having attended a preview too early in the run to be allowed to review it. When I returned a few weeks later, after it had been exposed to the public and the critics, I could detect no major changes, aside from the deepening of some performances. The problem is that the play was virtually crying out for revision after September 11. Although the action takes place three years earlier, it is now impossible to imagine these Western characters circulating among the Taliban without thinking of abductions, corpses, bomb craters, detention camps, and the recent terrorist attacks.

On second thought, instead of trying to update his play, Kushner might better have employed his energies trying to find some unity for it, or at least settling on what it was supposed to be about in the

us directly from a chair in her London home, using her guidebook to Afghanistan (based on Nancy Hatch Dupree's *An Historical Guide to Kabul*) as the basis for an investigation into the history, mores, and geography of this blighted land.

The Homebody's fascination with Afghanistan allows Kushner not only to turn his scholarly research into a theatrical metaphor, but also to make her compulsive nattering ("unregenerate chatterer that I am") into a medium for his own logorrhea. It is exhilarating to be engaged with this character's appetite for adventure, her embrace of life ("Oh, I love the world! I love love love love the world!"), though she has lost all feeling for a husband who is repelled by the very things about her that attract us most: "My husband cannot bear my—the sound of me and has threatened to leave on this account and so I rarely speak to him anymore." It is not surprising to learn that both are on anti-depressants. One way she fights her depression at this point is with her trip to Kabul.

What is most engaging about the Homebody is her intellectual curiosity. Her wandering mind has the capacity to go from the abstract and eternal to the specific and quotidian. A discourse on Third World hats ("abbreviated fez-like pillboxy attenuated yarmulka millinarisms, um, *hats*") turns into a discourse on human history, on guilt and causality. And just as swiftly it becomes the occasion for an account of a real or imagined affair with a Muslim hatmaker in London after she bought one of his sartorial products. Her diction is pitch perfect, and so is her self-understanding: "Where stands the Homebody, safe in her kitchen, on her culpable shore, suffering uselessly watching others perishing in the sea, wringing her plump little maternal hands, oh, oh." (That self-denigrating "oh, oh" is particularly good.) This monologue, a major feat of memory and persistence, is delivered with force and grace by Linda Emond. It is the most nuanced writing and acting of the season.

The bridge to the second, less effective part of the play is a Frank Sinatra tune, "It's Nice to Go Trav'ling." The Homebody's passion for Sinatra ("such an awful man, such perfect perfect music"), combined with her love of travel, has proved to be fatal. Her headphones are now one of the few remaining relics of her existence (in addition to three hats and her guidebook). She was presumably mur-

Coulter Brook

For Lou Werner and Elena Lilis

It never cooled the iron of a plough,
plunged in to make the water boil and shriek.
It never tempered human purposes.
There was a Coulter; he lived up the road.
He gave this Catskill mountain brook his name,
but he was never more than what he did.
Coulter put coulter to the earth and died.
Rounding a curve on spinning wheels of silver,
the vowels of water have forgotten him.
Past useful boneset pleasantly it hurries,
past Joe-Pye weed, forget-me-not and nightshade,
the fields beyond cut into sheaf and stook;
past Coulter's house, about a mile from here.
Incline your head and listen to it now.

Karl Kirchwey

dered because of "this impious music which is an affront to Islam" and because she was not wearing a burqa while walking in the streets of Kabul listening to it.

The next three hours of the play are taken up with the consequences of this clash of cultures. Gathered in a hotel room in Kabul as if at a wake are the Homebody's husband, Milton; her daughter, Priscilla; a British aid worker named Quango Twistleton; a mullah; and a Muslim doctor. They are discussing the fate of the Homebody in gruesome detail, before Priscilla, like Isis preparing to piece together the remains of her mutilated brother Osiris, goes off on a quest for her mother's missing body (she ends up finding the putative grave of Cain). The suspense of the play lies in the question of whether the Homebody is dead or whether she has eloped with a Muslim. This question is never fully resolved, though the people who press for the second option are obviously conning the family. But it is not plot that absorbs the playwright's attention. Kushner seems more interested in examining the impact of Afghanistan's competing customs on the innocent Western consciousness.

His other interest is the impact of the Afghan atmosphere on the mental health of his central characters. Milton, an electronics engineer, comes increasingly under the influence of Quango, whose mind has been blown by the country and by the extremely cheap drugs he can acquire there. ("Why else would I be here? Afghanistan supplies the world.") He and Milton will share an opium pipe and a heroin needle before the evening is over. The obscene, angry, vaguely suici-

dal Priscilla—"a virago dedicated to punishing everyone she's indebted to"—falls under the influence of an Esperanto poet named Khwaja, who is probably using her to smuggle anti-Taliban codes out of the country.

Much incident follows without ever adding up to a coherent story, climaxed by the most dramatic scene in the play—Priscilla is apprehended by Taliban police for carrying military information (the poems in Esperanto) out of the country for the Northern Alliance, and the Kabuli woman whom she has agreed to take with her is almost shot. The final scene takes place back in London, with the Afghan woman living in the family's home, sleeping with Milton, and tending to the garden that the Homebody neglected, having replaced her in every possible way.

With the exception of the Homebody, all of the Western characters are singularly unappealing, and the occasional anti-Western sentiments that we overhear suggest that this is deliberate. Milton (Dylan Baker) is a sour drudge; Priscilla (Kelly Hutchinson) is a whining bore; and Quango (Bill Camp) is a self-hating drugged-out sexual opportunist out of Graham Greene. Under the pinpoint direction of Declan Donnellan, though, almost all the parts are filled by very good actors, not only those mentioned but also Joseph Kamal, Yusef Bulos, and Rita Wolf. (The exception is Hutchinson, who, unable to find any variety for her role—not surprisingly, given its one-dimensional character—settles for undifferentiated screeching.) Nick Ormerod's set, a decaying pile of bricks and rubble, makes excellent use of the New York Theatre Workshop stage in handling the multiple locations. Indeed, the entire production seems to have been fashioned by first-rate professionals.

But *Homebody/Kabul*, alas, is an errant and wandering play. I can think of no other writer who could have handled this difficult subject in such an intelligent manner. And it is encouraging to see that Kushner has other subjects on his mind than homoerotic relationships. But it is maddening to find Kushner's large talents dissipated in a work that never quite seems to know where it is going. Thanks to the Homebody, we leave the theater having learned a lot more about Afghanistan than we knew when we came. But it is knowledge that has not been sufficiently rooted in either the human events of the play or the events of recent history. ■

Santayana Syndrome

By JAMES P. RUBIN

Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World by Walter Russell Mead

(Alfred A. Knopf, 374 pp., \$30)

I.

IT HAS BEEN a long time since Santayana's maxim about forgetting history and repeating history could be cited without irony. The sentence—which first appeared in 1905 in a chapter on “Reason and Common Sense” in Santayana's book *The Life of Reason*—has been so often and oppressively quoted that it has itself become the very symbol of cliché, the most common way of teaching a platitude by example. Those who do not remember Santayana's maxim, you might say, are condemned to repeat it. But there is at least one precinct of American life in which the famous admonition still has the power to sting: the American government, and particularly the institutions of American foreign policy.

Until only a few decades ago, when “policy studies” came into its own, the study of the past was still deemed to be the best preparation for the practice of diplomacy. History was the only school of international affairs. It provided the policy-maker with models and precedents and warnings. And those who did not remember history ... etcetera, etcetera. Walter Russell Mead's exceedingly interesting new book is written in such a Santayanian spirit. It is premised on the continued pertinence of the knowledge of history to the fashioning of foreign policy. His goal is to provide a framework for American history that will help policy-makers to avoid the pitfalls of their predecessors. Since “our national ignorance of our own past successes impoverishes our foreign policy process today,” Mead believes that “our elites and our policy-makers would benefit from a richer, deeper understanding of the principles and goals of their predecessors.”

Mead's historiography of American

JAMES P. RUBIN is visiting professor of international relations at the London School of Economics. He was assistant secretary of state for public affairs from 1997 to 2000.

foreign policy purports to identify four schools of thought, four traditions of American diplomacy: Jeffersonian, Hamiltonian, Jacksonian, Wilsonian. His book contains pithy and useful descriptions of our foreign policy debates from the continental expansion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, the infamous interwar years, and of course the international institutions founded after World War II. The book is a treasure trove for modern-day policy-makers seeking historical justifications for their positions.

Mead's approach is to offer an even-handed analysis of the emergence and the endurance of what he calls Jeffersonian, Hamiltonian, Jacksonian, and Wilsonian foreign policies. If nothing else, his account serves two important purposes. It debunks the myth of an America in eternal pursuit of “virtuous isolation,” and it explains why the ideas and practices of “realism,” the diplomacy commonly associated with Talleyrand, Bismarck, and Metternich, among others, have enjoyed so little appeal in America.

WE BEGIN WITH the Hamiltonians. This school is built on the conviction of the primacy of international economics. To ensure America's independence and prosperity in its early years, the United States had to protect the freedom of the seas, open the door for our exports around the world, and prevent any other power from challenging these principles. But ensuring the freedom of the seas and the open door was no mean task in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mead chronicles the dozens of times that American ships and soldiers were sent around the world to protect against piracy at sea or to back up our diplomats' insistence on access to trading routes and concessions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The latter task often meant challenging European powers as they sought to divide up the world colonially.

By the turn of the century, the Hamil-

tonians, led by Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, played a crucial role in building the Panama Canal and establishing America's global role. The construction of the canal was a race with the British that the Hamiltonians were determined to win. It confirmed once and for all America's hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. And meanwhile Washington was determined to prevent the British, the Europeans, and the Japanese from dividing the spoils of potential trade with China. By means of military action in the Spanish-American War and the Philippines, or by means of convening diplomatic talks between Japan and Russia following the Russo-Japanese War, American leaders protected America's access to markets throughout the world, and blocked Japan from becoming a hegemon in East Asia. The Hamiltonians were also determined that America enter World War I on the side of Britain and France, lest all the gains made in past decades under the British umbrella be lost in the aftermath of a German victory in Europe.

The Hamiltonians were Anglophiles; but Mead points out that their approach to America's global role was markedly different from that of the British Empire. They sought a system in which other nations joined international trading systems voluntarily. In their minds, a global system had to be based on the free participation of states. They were the precursors to today's proponents of globalization, because they believed that an effective trading system was far more beneficial than the zero-sum game so popular with European statesmen such as Metternich. Moreover, mutually beneficial commercial arrangements between states would reduce the risks of war. In Mead's account, the American avoidance of the excesses of British imperialism was owed not to moral considerations, but to economic ones.

Mead's account of American policy throughout the nineteenth century is interesting also for another reason. It presents no evidence and provides no support for the stereotypical portrait of the United States as a naturally isolationist state, nestled comfortably in the protections of two vast oceans and seeking to avoid the foreign entanglements of which its first president famously warned in his parting words to his young country. Indeed, Mead argues that “the myth of virtuous isolation ... was in fact a profoundly anti-historical myth.” The Hamiltonians made sure that American policy up to World War I was filled with messy diplomatic and military disputes with European powers and with China and Japan. This was engagement of the most intense kind.

JEFFERSON'S SCHOOL, ACCORDING to Mead, was (and is: again, Mead believes that these types persist to this day) concerned mainly with protecting American democracy against the dangers of executive power and limiting the costs and the risks of whatever foreign policies were necessary to protect our independence. Idealism at home, realism abroad: this was the Jeffersonian motto.

The Jeffersonians, beginning with Jefferson, feared that Hamiltonian engagement abroad would lead to a standing army and navy, and new powers for the president, and a weaker congressional oversight role, and a greater degree of secrecy in government. When the Hamiltonians looked around the world, they saw opportunity. The Jeffersonians saw danger. They were the early deficit hawks, believing that wars or conflicts abroad aimed at opening markets would increase the national debt, and benefit mainly the bankers, and oppress the citizenry with higher taxes. Eisenhower's concern about the rise of a military-industrial complex was a supremely Jeffersonian concern.

As to the morality of foreign affairs, Jeffersonians had their hearts in the right place. They did see the United States as a "city on the hill." But they did not believe that America should promote freedom and prosperity by exporting our way of doing things. Instead the United States was to teach its values and its successes by example. John Quincy Adams expressed this view definitively when he remarked that the United States "goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own."

This did not mean that the Jeffersonians were classical isolationists, though. They were minimalists with a realist streak. Indeed, Mead explains that the first real organizational framework for American foreign policy—the system established by the Monroe Doctrine—owed its success to the support of both the Hamiltonian and the Jeffersonian schools. The Monroe Doctrine, promulgated in 1823, was a grand bargain with our former mother country: we would accept British naval dominance and help to maintain a balance of power on the European continent while Britain would help us to meet any challenge to American dominance of the Western Hemisphere. This *modus vivendi* with the British was a perfect compact for the growth of the American economy. For the Jeffersonians, this doctrine was a low-cost approach that protected our independence while avoiding dangerous intrigues and interventions on the Continent. The alternative—a never-ending effort to fend off European colonial designs—was worse.

As advocates of the Monroe system that persisted throughout the nineteenth century, the Jeffersonians complained about—but generally acquiesced in—one foreign adventure after the other as the Hamiltonians sought to make the world safe for the American economy. The Jeffersonians did not really seem out of step with mainstream thought until World War I, when they challenged the global ambitions of the Hamiltonians under Roosevelt and the newly minted Wilsonians. Mead is right to emphasize that the failure of the League of Nations was not so much a victory for isolationism as a failure of Wilson and Henry Cabot Lodge (the great Hamiltonian of the day) to make the compromise that would have robbed Senator William Borah and the Jeffersonians of their triumph. But the Jeffersonians were soon in disgrace, as they were the last to acknowledge the danger of Hitler's Germany. As realists, they apparently assumed that the other European powers would unite to stop Hitler's conquest of the Continent. Sometimes it is realism that is unrealistic.

Despite their realist streak, the Jeffersonians' political philosophy was fundamentally in conflict with the practitioners of realism on the European continent. The Jeffersonians wanted brilliant diplomats to solve America's problems with little risk, but they believed that the worst thing that could happen to American government would be the rise of all-powerful, secretive warrior-diplomats of the Bismarckian variety who were so admired in Europe. They wanted more congressional oversight, greater civilian control over the military, open decisions openly debated, and a diplomatic corps that would not conceive of its mission as hobnobbing with the European aristocracy. They desired a diplomacy that would not offend their democratic sensibilities. They feared, and with good reason, that too many European wars were caused by the quarrels and the jealousies of monarchs and aristocrats, rather than by fundamental clashes of interest between nations.

MEAD'S TREATMENT OF the roots of the Wilsonian mentality is particularly fine. He shows how Wilsonianism emerged out of the missionary movement in the United States in the nineteenth century, when tens of thousands of Americans lived abroad and spread the word of God by offering education, rudimentary technology, food and medicine, and the promotion of civil society. American missionaries both served and placed demands on the government. They were the eyes and the ears of their home country, bringing a unique expertise to a rudimentary diplomatic

corps. (Their crowning achievement in the twentieth century was the local knowledge that they made available to General MacArthur as he oversaw the re-building of Japan after World War II.) But the missionaries also needed protection, by means of American diplomacy or American troops, if they faced threats of violence in China, Japan, and the Ottoman Empire. At home, their churches and their supporters petitioned the government in much the same ways as Amnesty International and certain religious groups do today, demanding that American diplomats put human rights on the agenda. They also generated the exchanges that brought foreign students to America and educated Americans about the diversity of cultures around the world.

The Wilsonian grand strategy became clear during the extraordinary debate over the League of Nations. It was this modern American school of thought about international affairs that was the first to argue what is accepted wisdom today: that democracies make better, more reliable, and more predictable partners than dictatorships. Like the Jeffersonians, the Wilsonians believed that monarchies and dictators did not reflect the enduring national interests of their countries, but were the egregious causes of needless wars provoked by petty personal quarrels and wild policy swings when governments fell.

This notion of democratization as a goal of foreign policy led to the Wilsonians' most important contribution. In seeking to make the world "safe for democracy," they placed the United States on the right side of history as democratic change and independence slowly and fitfully swept across the globe. While Hamiltonians and Wilsonians broadly agreed on issues such as anti-colonialism and a stable world order, it was Wilson who promoted Jefferson's declaration of independence, with its ringing articulation of the natural rights of man, into a document of American foreign policy, and made the promotion of those same rights into a guiding principle of American actions abroad.

About the role of idealism in foreign policy the Wilsonians were right. They were also successful, in the sense that America's global dominance in the last hundred years cannot be attributed solely to its military supremacy or its economic power. If the United States is today a "hegemon," it is not least because of the steadily increasing popularity of the American ideal of life, and of the strategy of democratization that the Wilsonians built into American foreign policy. Most criticism of American policies around the world—save that of Communist China and a few others, which do not pretend to anything higher than their own airless

and authoritarian rule—is based not on a repudiation of Wilsonian principles, but on a resentment that certain governments of the United States have been unable or unwilling to apply Wilson's vision in a consistent manner.

It is Wilson's vision that makes us admired around the world in a way that the European powers and empires never were. Unfortunately, the Wilsonian school is now most associated with advocating policy by treaty. In addition to promoting the often ineffectual United Nations, many contemporary Wilsonians have put their energies behind the creation of the International Court of Justice, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the myriad international conventions regulating the laws of war. The inevitable difficulties in negotiating, ratifying, and monitoring the implementation of those documents has now become their main preoccupation. Their notion of American interventionism on behalf of American values rarely includes American military intervention.

WHICH BRINGS US to the Jacksonians. Mead's account of the Jacksonian model in American foreign policy is controversial; Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has raised serious questions about Mead's scholarship in this area. Schlesinger has objected to Mead's depiction of Jacksonians as "warlike, trigger-happy, fundamentalist, nativist, paranoid, protectionist... and committed to an anti-internationalist, unilateralist course in foreign affairs," and he has concluded that "nearly everything Mr. Mead ascribes to Jacksonianism was untrue of Andrew Jackson and his administration.... He is not at all interested in Jacksonian facts. He is enchanted by a literary conceit that turns into a gross case of historical hijacking." I am not a historian, and I have no reason to believe that Schlesinger's criticism of Mead is incorrect. And yet the current that Mead labels "Jacksonian" will have a ring of familiarity to any student of American foreign policy; and it certainly reflects the tangled and thorny relationship between American politics and American diplomacy.

The Jacksonians, in Mead's account, arose out of the frontier and the folk culture that Andrew Jackson most perfectly and noisily represented. This view of American foreign policy remains most popular in the Southwest, the Deep South, and parts of the Midwest, where the frontier experience was crucial to the development of local politics. The Jacksonians are the warriors of American society. While they prefer to avoid conflict with the rest of the world and often rail at the complications of economic engagement,

they believe that if war comes we should deploy all our power in ruthless pursuit of total victory. The Japanese admiral who was said to describe the United States as a "sleeping giant" was referring to America in its Jacksonian mood, a country slow to anger but fearsome in anger.

The Jacksonians, as Mead describes them, are somewhat uncomfortable with representative government. They prefer a populist, Perot-style democracy at home and simple solutions abroad. They are protectionist in opposition to the global trade strategies of the Hamiltonians, and highly critical of the complexities in the patient diplomacy of the Jeffersonians, and contemptuous of the Wilsonians for the naïveté of their attempt to promote democratic values abroad. For obvious reasons, this is the American school that Europeans least understand, the American taste for effective action that they regard as crude cowboy diplomacy.

Mead rightly points out that it is this school that provides the political support for the high levels of spending that have made our military so successful. And it is the Jacksonians who are prepared to make the sacrifices in blood and treasure to achieve victory when war breaks out. They are decidedly not isolationist. While they may have a limited view of America's global interests, they are prepared to act—and act decisively—if those interests are threatened. Whether it is in defense of the lives of American citizens and missionaries abroad or the right of continental expansion, or in response to the sinking of American ships in World War I and Pearl Harbor or the loss of vital oil in the Persian Gulf, the Jacksonian impulse has made America's military supreme and our rise to global power possible.

II.

A GAIN, I AM not a historian, but Mead's framework for the analysis of foreign policy strikes me as at least conceptually adequate. The schools that he portrays do represent the competing currents that a policy-maker in Washington faces today. His framework is certainly more precise than the old categories of hawk and dove, left and right, internationalist and isolationist, unilateralist and multilateralist.

During the first Bush administration and the two Clinton administrations, the United States pursued an international economic policy that can be accurately described as Hamiltonian. NAFTA, GATT, China's accession to the World Trade Organization, the prominence of the World Bank and the IMF: all reflected Hamiltonian preferences. And Mead is surely right that recent presidents have had so

much trouble winning congressional support for free trade policies because of opposition from contemporary Jeffersonians, who do not wish to give the executive too much power, and from contemporary Wilsonians, who are concerned about labor and environmental standards, and from contemporary Jacksonians, who favor protectionism.

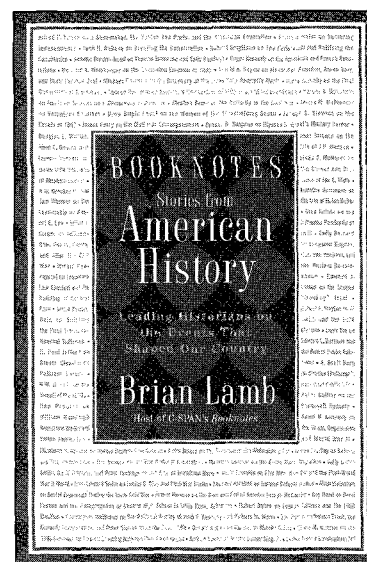
The first Bush administration's decision to expel Iraq from Kuwait was both Hamiltonian in its focus on the vital significance of oil to the world economy and somewhat Wilsonian in its use of the United Nations and its rhetoric of a "new world order." Similarly, President Bush's decision to intervene in Somalia to save hundreds of thousands of people from starvation, and President Clinton's interventions to restore democracy in Haiti and to bring a halt to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, were largely Wilsonian in conception and execution.

The difficulty that Bush and Clinton experienced in obtaining congressional support for those uses of military force reflects the continuing power of the different camps that Mead has identified. It is worth remembering that the vote in the Senate about the Gulf War was an awfully close 53 to 47, with many senators reflecting Jacksonian views that Saddam Hussein's irredentism was not our problem.

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

Ask for it at your favorite bookseller.

"Delightful to read"—*Columbus Dispatch*



Watch Booknotes on C-SPAN
Sundays at 8 pm and 11 pm ET.

C-SPAN®

Created by Cable. Offered as a Public Service.

Other lawmakers made Wilsonian and Jeffersonian arguments: they argued that rescue of the autocratic emir of Kuwait was not an American moral priority, and that sanctions should be given more time. In the Balkans, many Jeffersonians believed that some form of "realist" diplomacy was preferable to the risk of another Vietnam. (In the early days of the recent American operation in Afghanistan also, the word "quagmire" was often heard.) Jacksonians did not see any compelling American interest in that part of the world, and then were paradoxically appalled at the limited application of American force.

Similarly, using Mead's framework, it can be argued that American policy toward China was so unstable and inconsistent during the 1990s precisely because none of the four schools was able to establish its dominance over that policy. Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians saw normal relations with China as making good economic and diplomatic sense. Some Wilsonians were appalled by China's abuses of human rights. And most Jacksonians did not like the massive trade imbalance, and wanted to punish Beijing for its Communist government.

THE PROBLEM WITH Mead's scheme of classification is the problem with every scheme of classification. It is too neat. Mead's analysis runs into trouble when he avoids or misrepresents a number of modern-day complexities. For one thing, there is barely a mention of a new school of American diplomacy that is proving more influential by the day. This school is Wilsonian in its objective—the promotion of freedom in China, Iraq, and around the globe; but it is not shy of using military force to achieve those objectives, and prefers American military action unencumbered by alliances or the burdens of international approval. It is certainly not Jacksonian, because its advocates have expansive goals for American foreign policy that are not limited to classical definitions of the vital interests of the United States.

This camp—call its members the Pax Americanists—is led in the Bush administration by Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Richard Perle. On any given day its numbers include more than a few members of the House and the Senate, and of the staff of this magazine and *The Weekly Standard*. The Pax Americanists want the United States to have a military capable of promoting democracy and freedom across the world. Whether it is a national missile defense to provide the U.S. military with the protection that would be an essential condition of any possible intervention on behalf of demo-

cratic Taiwan, or the use of steadily escalating American military forces in support of the Iraqi opposition to end the tyranny in Iraq, or military intervention to stop Slobodan Milosevic, this school has ambitions for democracy that would make even a Wilsonian look on in wonder.

WHEN IT COMES to the modern-day Jeffersonians, Mead is on his weakest ground. He centers this school on the "realists" who opposed the Vietnam War and other purported excesses of the Cold War; who support the War Powers Resolution's restrictions on the use of force, and fear government secrecy, and dislike covert operations, and advocate stronger congressional oversight, and prefer to solve problems diplomatically rather than through the use of force. Mead proceeds to classify Colin Powell and Henry Kissinger as Jeffersonians, and suggests that George W. Bush has a Jeffersonian streak because in his presidential campaign he called for a new "humility" in our foreign policy.

Powell certainly has Jeffersonian inclinations. He seems perfectly comfortable with the traditional diplomat's Hippocratic promise to "do no harm." He is reported to have advocated the use of sanctions over the use of force against Saddam Hussein in the lead-up to the Gulf War. He was a consistent advocate of using diplomacy rather than American intervention in the Balkans, because he held the view that the American people would not support a war there. But the Powell Doctrine of defining America's interest so narrowly, and of using only "overwhelming" or "decisive" force, is nothing if not Jacksonian. And he has become as eloquent an advocate of global trade and opening markets in his travels around the world as any Hamiltonian.

I suspect that Henry Kissinger would be appalled by Mead's label. If there is one figure who has consistently bemoaned the damage that congressional oversight has done to our international activities, and argued in favor of stronger executive powers of secrecy and covert operations, it is Kissinger. He has never been one to avoid the use of force at all costs. Given his views on strategic bombing in Vietnam and on arming the *contras* in Nicaragua or the mujahideen in Afghanistan, and his strong advocacy of the Gulf War, and his Jacksonian call for the use of ground forces in Kosovo to protect the credibility of NATO, and his incessant criticism of Clinton for not conducting massive air attacks against Saddam Hussein, the characterization of Kissinger as a "Jeffersonian" seems almost libelous. (And libelous to Jefferson, too.)

Mead correctly identifies George Ken-

nan as the perfect modern Jeffersonian. But George W. Bush? His campaign call for a new diplomatic "humility" was surrounded, after all, by Jacksonian calls for eliminating the ABM treaty, confronting China, sanctioning Russia for Chechnya, and rejecting negotiations with North Korea, and also by Hamiltonian commitments to expand free trade and respond to the concerns of big business.

III.

IT IS THE Jeffersonian school to which Mead attaches himself. At the end of his book, he limns his own idea of a framework for American foreign policy in the twenty-first century. It is crushingly disappointing. What Mead proposes is this: the United States should define our vital interests and our secondary interests, and then adopt a "grand strategy" that "secures all of the vital interests and as many of the secondary interests as can reasonably be achieved with the fewest risks and costs." Well, yes. Who could disagree? But at such a level of generality and abstraction Mead's prescription is useless. Indeed, it is barely a prescription at all. It is only a platitude, even if Mead himself finds in his formula more evidence of the "strategic elegance" of the Jeffersonian tradition, whatever that means.

Mead is surely right when he says that modern leaders armed with a genuinely historical perspective—not Hamiltonian, Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, or Wilsonian diplomats, but Santayanan diplomats—will make better decisions and be better able to explain their decisions to the American people. As Mead aptly remarks, the task facing "those who aspire to lead the nation is to find within each of the enduring traditions of American statesmanship ways to speak to the aspirations and values of the American people... and to create policies that deserve the sacrifices that people may someday have to make to see that they are carried out." But in claiming that those in the highest levels of government are ignorant of history, and in asserting that Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton were all lacking his own unique perspective when they made so many mistakes, Mead's self-satisfaction carries him much too far.

Given Mead's statement that "it is only our diplomats and our foreign policy thinkers who find little to inspire them in the record of the past," it seems fair to ask: how would Mead the historian perform as Mead the policy-maker? Not very well, alas. In Mead's case, too, the Balkans were the test: *in Bosnia veritas*. Intervention in the Balkans was in many ways the defining foreign policy issue for the United States in the 1990s. The reason for its

importance was simple: existing American policies offered little guidance in this particular crisis. It was not a question of following through on Cold War commitments. It was not a region like the Middle East, in which most people agree that the United States has vital interests. Many of our closest allies, notably Britain, had staked out a clear position against direct intervention and for accommodation with Milosevic's Serbia. American lives were not endangered. So what was the United States to do?

According to Mead, it is precisely such situations in which the long view of the historian should prove useful. And what were Mead's recommendations? Since he writes a column for the *Los Angeles Times*, the evolution of Mead's opinions is wickedly easy to track. Early on, he appeared to recognize the importance of the Balkans. In September, 1991, he argued for a strong American policy to put a halt to European bickering, warning that "we ignore [the Balkans] at our peril." By August, 1992, however, Mead's tune had changed dramatically. He put his historian's hat on, asserting that "Americans don't understand history" and that "intervention would be a disaster."

Then Mead pulled a triple Santayana, using the very arguments that became so popular with Bush administration officials and with Clinton in his early years. First, there was the "ancient hatreds" argument. The Balkans had been wracked by ethnic war since the Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389, through the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires, and culminating in the Croatian slaughter of Serbs during World War II. Then there was the claim that even Hitler had failed to suppress the mighty and battle-hardened Serb guerrillas. And then he threw in a dose of American history—intervention looked like "the slow road to Vietnam: an unwinnable, open-ended ground war against entrenched guerrillas"—and a quotation from Theodore Roosevelt—"if the League of Nations means that we will have to go to war every time a Yugo-slav wishes to slap a Czech-slav in the face, then I won't follow them."

All this was supposed to amount to a powerful and incontrovertible argument against American involvement. But a few months later Mead changed his mind again. In December, 1992, anxious about the rise of "the fascists in Serbia," he called for the establishment of humanitarian safe areas, and advocated "a clear warning backed up by overwhelming force" that "might bring Serbia back to its senses."

By 1994 and 1995, the history lecture on Vietnam and ancient hatreds was back. In the months prior to the NATO air strikes in the summer of 1995 and the resulting Dayton Peace Accords, Mead

was arguing that air strikes would not change the military balance; only ground forces could make a difference, but a ground war was a Vietnam-like quagmire. In February, 1994, he even cited European history to extenuate "ethnic cleansing," claiming that it was little different from the forcible removals that were so common throughout European history prior to World War II. He went so far as to praise Clinton for the "new realism" and sophistication that he showed by not following through on air strike threats and recognizing the reality that the Serbs had won.

"The only sensible thing to do is to find a peace proposal acceptable to the Serbs," Mead wrote in May, 1995. But then in early August, 1995, Clinton finally changed his policy. He decided to threaten the removal of U.N. peacekeepers to bring the Europeans on board, and to use NATO air strikes against the Serbs to stop the slaughter in Sarajevo and to force them to accept the West's peace plan, and to leave open the option of lifting the arms embargo if the Serbs remained intransigent. Two weeks before this historic decision was made, Mead became increasingly strident in his opposition. If we pursue such a plan, he wrote in July, 1995, "the grim barbaric slaughter in Bosnia will worsen ... the disintegration of the Western alliance will accelerate—and U.S. prestige will suffer new and heavy blows."

All of this advice was wrapped in another dollop of Santayanism. Clinton's new plan, Mead claimed, would repeat the mistakes of British policy in 1920 toward the crumbling Ottoman Empire, when Turkey refused to back down against a French and British force that was defending the Greeks. The resulting rout of the Greeks by the Turks was a humiliating disaster for the British Empire, which Mead predicted that Clinton was destined to repeat. But the really striking thing, of course, was that *none* of these "lessons of history" was "repeated." As a consequence of the new American policy, the Serbs backed down, the war ended, and NATO's and America's prestige was restored and even enhanced.

When the Kosovo crisis emerged three years later, Mead, like many other strident opponents of intervention in Bosnia, refused to credit Clinton for actually learning the lessons of history—in this case, the recent history of Bosnia. Following Milosevic's refusal to accept the Rambouillet accord, or even to discuss seriously the details of a NATO peacekeeping force for Kosovo, NATO air power was at last engaged. Eventually there was even a threat to use ground forces. Milosevic capitulated. NATO's central demands were met: all Serb troops left Kosovo, and a NATO-led peacekeeping force was deployed (it is

still there), and all those miserable Kosovar Albanians in Macedonia and Albania returned to their homes in the fastest repatriation in the annals of the U.N. High Commission on Refugees.

AND WHAT DID Mead have to say about this success, based as it was on learning the lessons of Bosnia and recognizing that the Balkans were not Vietnam and that the Serb military of 1999 was not the same as the Serbian guerrilla force of the early 1940s? Mead argued that the Serbs won! In accord with Belgrade's spin, he asserted in June, 1999 that the Kosovo settlement was made on Milosevic's terms, because the force was deployed under a U.N. umbrella, and because the West weakened its support for an independent Kosovo.

Both those claims are absurd. The American government always envisaged that the NATO force would be deployed pursuant to a resolution of the Security Council. Despite strenuous objections from Moscow and Belgrade, the resolution specifically ensured that the NATO commander was to coordinate his activities with U.N. civilian officials on the ground; but in a clear reflection of the lessons of Bosnia, the NATO commander would not answer to the U.N. Security Council or to any U.N. official in the Secretariat. Most observers would agree that this arrangement has worked remarkably well over the last two and a half years. As for independence for Kosovo, the position of the West has remained unchanged. If anything, the idea of Kosovo's independence had greater currency after the war than it did at the time of the Rambouillet accord, when the Albanian delegation nearly scuttled the talks because we would not give them the guaranteed path to independence that they sought. Unlike Mead, moreover, the Serb people thought that Slobodan Milosevic had lost in Kosovo. And I have the strong feeling that even Milosevic himself, sitting in the dock at The Hague, does not quite believe that he outsmarted NATO in the final hours of the air war, even though he believes (to judge by his Orwellian oration in court) many wild things.

During the great debates over the Balkans, history was used as a weapon by both sides. The opponents of American military involvement summoned the lessons of Vietnam, while the proponents conjured up Munich. And it turned out that neither of these precedents was a good analogy. Perhaps the lesson of the Balkans for American policy-makers is that sometimes it is better to be ignorant of history than a prisoner of history. Those who remember Santayana may be condemned to forget much else. ■

Edifice Rex

By NATHAN GLAZER

Louis Kahn's Situated Modernism by Sarah Williams Goldhagen

(Yale University Press, 277 pp., \$45)

Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture edited by Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault

(MIT Press, 335 pp., \$34.95)

LOUIS KAHN IS greatly admired among architectural historians, architectural critics, and architects, but I suspect he is not particularly known among the general public, even that part of it with some interest in architecture. Philip Johnson, I. M. Pei, Frank Gehry, and others have made it to major articles in mass magazines, but I do not recall that the reigning organs of popular opinion have ever taken serious note of Kahn. Sarah Williams Goldhagen, by contrast, describes him in her splendid book as "the greatest architect of the postwar period," and she is not alone in this estimation. Martin Filler, the architecture critic of this magazine, concurs, and not long ago referred to Kahn in *The New York Times* as "the greatest architect of the last half-century." And in reviewing a retrospective of the work of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown in these pages, Filler had this to say about Kahn's reputation among architectural critics: "In the late 1970s, when I was a young editor at *Progressive Architecture* magazine, my colleagues and I tried to predict who would be the heir to Louis Kahn, who had died not long before, but was already acknowledged as the spiritual (if not the stylistic) successor to Frank Lloyd Wright."

Filler wrote this encomium while major exhibits on the work of Mies van der Rohe and Frank Gehry were being shown in New York at the Guggenheim, the Whitney, and the Museum of Modern Art, so he was well aware of possible competitors. Those are strong words of praise, and others could be added from other quarters. There are scores of books on Kahn, including books in French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, and German, as well as in English. And yet, if I am correct in my judg-

ment of the limited extent of popular knowledge of Kahn, it is first necessary to say who he was, what he did, and why Sarah Williams Goldhagen has devoted ten years of her life to another book on his work.

Louis Kahn was born in 1901 in Estonia, to Jewish parents. His father emigrated to Philadelphia in 1904, his mother brought their son over in 1906, and Kahn spent the rest of his life in Philadelphia. He attended its public schools and the University of Pennsylvania, and began working as an architect for the city in the 1920s. By the late 1920s, he had saved enough money to travel to Europe, where the leading examples of the new modernism in architecture were to be found; but they do not seem to have made any great impact on Kahn. He had studied under the Beaux Arts-trained architect Paul Cret, and during his travels in Europe—he spent the greatest part of his time in Italy—he made sketches of the things that impressed him, but none of these, from the reproductions in the various books on Kahn that I have seen, were of modern buildings. They were of the great medieval churches and civic buildings of premodern Europe that have always impressed architects, whatever else they were subsequently to do.

The Depression found Kahn unemployed, but he was active in the various reform-oriented organizations that architects and planners were creating. With the advent of the New Deal, new opportunities—in low-cost housing and in the early New Deal efforts at resettlement of urban workers (it was hoped that unemployed New York City garment workers would settle in New Jersey, and some of them did)—became available, and Kahn became a member of the company of

reform-minded planners and architects that included Lewis Mumford and Catherine Bauer Wurster.

It is intriguing to note that Kahn's acquaintances at this time included also Paul Goodman and Percival Goodman, the authors of an exciting book on modernist utopias called *Communitas*, which at one time was widely influential among architects and planners. In these latter days, of course, neither *Communitas* nor the idea of utopia plays much of a role in architecture and urban design. But Paul Goodman became a major influence among intellectuals and students with his criticism of contemporary society in the 1960s; and Percival Goodman became one of the most prolific designers of postwar modernist synagogues.

Kahn became known to leading architects and writers on architecture, and began to get commissions for houses from individuals in the Philadelphia Jewish community, and also commissions for other buildings through his connections with the labor movement, in particular the ILGWU. He also began to teach: he became a visiting critic at the Yale School of Architecture in 1947, commuting to New Haven from Philadelphia. In 1951, Kahn received his first major commission, to design an addition to the Yale University Art Gallery. Other major commissions followed, among them the Richards Medical Center at the University of Pennsylvania, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, the library of the Phillips Academy in Exeter, the Center for British Art at Yale, the Salk Institute in La Jolla, the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad, and—the capstone of his career—the capitol complex for East Pakistan, later Bangladesh, in Dhaka. (A picture of a great interior space in that building appears on the dust jacket of Goldhagen's book.) Kahn died in 1974, while the capitol building was under construction.

MUCH OF THIS sketch I have gleaned from other books on Louis Kahn, in particular the huge multi-author volume *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture*, which accompanied a major retrospective of his work in the early 1990s. Sarah Williams Goldhagen tells us little of the details of Kahn's career, and certain questions that came to my own mind about the various sides of Kahn's story do not arise in her discussion. One wonders, for example, how a Jewish immigrant boy established a career in architecture in the 1920s and became linked to its leading figures and its leading teaching institutions at a time when architecture was not a typical career choice for urban Jewish immigrants, and indeed was something of a

profession for the well-to-do, for those with suitable connections. I imagine that the environment of reform during the Depression and the New Deal was crucial for forging the links that made Kahn's career possible; but this is not a theme that Goldhagen pursues.

Her interest is entirely in what Kahn made of modern architecture. And in this regard Goldhagen wishes to take issue with an established view of Kahn's work in architecture, according to which he was a precursor of the "postmodernism" that arose as a critique of modernism's aridity in the 1970s, though a precursor who managed to avoid the oddity and the silliness of some postmodern buildings. In Goldhagen's view, Kahn's great achievement was to modify architectural modernism by moving it toward gravity, solidity, a simple geometry—away from "form follows function" to something like "form imposes itself on function." Kahn's contribution is seen as an innovation *within* the modern movement in the kind of design that flowed from modernism's criticisms of traditional, historically based architecture.

This was one root of modernism. But modernism in architecture had another and very different set of roots stemming from social concerns. There can be little dispute that Kahn became an architectural modernist more through his involvement with modernism's social side than through an attachment to its stylistic innovations. He worked on low-cost housing, on new communities. He was interested in new technologies that would reduce the cost of housing, and in community planning for a better environment for workers than could be provided by traditional architecture and hierarchical planning, with their commitments to traditional styles, ornament, and materials (all of which, it was then thought, added to a building's expense). Flat roofs, concrete, glass, steel, orientation to sunlight, community spaces: these were the themes of early modernism in architecture. Working and writing in this mode, Kahn became a figure of importance.

But then his own work, starting in the 1950s, took a very different course. His buildings become formalistic, with little in them of the modernist prescription of form following function. (I leave aside the question of how much the masters of modernism actually followed their famous maxim.) In the end, it is true, functions must be accommodated, otherwise there are no commissions; and they were more or less accommodated in Kahn's buildings. But it is the method of Kahn's accommodation that stands out. In the various schemes through which Goldhagen leads us, built and unbuilt,

those adaptations were achieved by means of circles, squares, triangles, hexagons, figures that seem born in the mind or drawn from distant archetypes rather than derived from the functional need that is to be accommodated. Kahn was much attached to encircling his buildings with square or cylindrical towers. He did find functions of a sort for these elements—to accommodate services, or to bring in light in interesting ways—but they seem to be drawn less from functional need than from his recollections of the towers of San Gimignano or various medieval city walls and cathedrals.

SO HOW MAY we connect Kahn's early modernism with his later work? And why is his later work so influential? Goldhagen makes the link, in opposition to other interpretations of Kahn, primarily through Kahn's early interest in monumentalism and monumental buildings. It became evident early in modernism's career that it failed most abjectly when it came to monuments. As World War II was coming to an end, however, it was clear that monuments would be needed, and that democracy would have to find ways of building its own monuments, particularly since totalitarianism had been so addicted to them. The advocates of modernism began debating the issue in the 1940s, during the war. Goldhagen has produced an interesting treatment of this new concern of modernist architects.

George Nelson, a modernist architect, put the problem most effectively:

The contemporary architect, cut off from symbols, ornament and meaningful elaborations of structural forms... has desperately chased every functional requirement... to provide some basis for starting his work. Where the limitations were most rigorous, as for example in a factory... the designers were most happy and the results most satisfying. But let a religious belief or a social ideal replace cubic foot costs or radiation losses, and nothing happened. There is not a single modern church in the entire country that is comparable to a first-rate cafeteria....

Lewis Mumford, whose word was authoritative, wrote bluntly that "if it is a monument it is not modern, and if it is modern it is not a monument."

But how could the urge to the monumental be denied the victorious democratic politics? Various architects and theorists and critics were called upon to debate the issue, and one of them, surprisingly, was Louis Kahn, who was not well-known at the time, with very little

building or writing to his credit. Goldhagen finds in Kahn's essay on monumentality, which was published in 1944, the thread that pulls together the entirety of Kahn's enterprise. In that essay he argued for (I am quoting Goldhagen) "living memorials, which he called 'social' monuments such as 'the school, the community or cultural center': these, he contended, were the harbingers of a new civilization.... His vision was resolutely reformist." Kahn tried to envisage physically the kind of cultural center a group of citizens might create: "The contradiction between what he drew in these sketches and what he stated in the text—'must the cathedral, the cultural center... resemble Chartres?'—revealed two aspects of his sensibility which would later come into tension with one another. On the one hand, he wished his architecture to have symbolic resonance, and one way of doing this was through reference to known buildings. On the other hand, he sought an idiom that gained conceptual force primarily from the discrete presence of its material articulation."

Goldhagen reproduces a very revealing sketch from Kahn's article on monumentality. On the left are great pointed arches, simple and light, made presumably of steel, with tiny figures sketched underneath them. This evokes what modern monumentality might be like. To the right, Kahn has a sketch of a bay of Beauvais Cathedral, which surprisingly duplicates his metal great arch in scale and curvature. The cathedral at Beauvais went further than any other Gothic cathedral in reaching for height and lightness, and it collapsed. Is Kahn telling us that it is a suitable model for monumentality today? That would be surprising for a modernist architect.

Thus at the very beginning we find an ambiguity, a reaching in two directions, that leads other analysts of Kahn to find a sharp turn in the early 1950s. Goldhagen recognizes the ambiguity, but she insists on a more basic continuity, and to make her case for the continuity of Kahn's career she devises the notion of "situated modernism." It is not easy to see what she means by "situated modernism." It seems to mean a modernism that does not insist on the uniformity of solutions—of building materials, styles—everywhere and in all things, a temptation that was encouraged by the common modernist notion that since we were everywhere becoming a common international culture, an "international style" was the right response.

So I take Kahn's "situatedness" to refer to the adaptation of building to culture, to local materials, to distinctive needs and ideals. Goldhagen goes further in trying to define "situatedness" in her contribu-

tion to the book that she has edited with Réjean Legault, *Anxious Modernisms*, which demonstrates the many different directions in which postwar modernism went. But I may be reading Goldhagen too simply in this attempt to locate the "situated." She does not put the matter as straightforwardly as I have above.

Situatedness, in Goldhagen's account, seems also to refer to the personal, the individual. In some way the architect is to take account of individual needs as well as the larger culture or society to which his architecture makes some adaptation. Situatedness refers as well to democratic ideals, and to the individual's participation in society, which is also to be evoked or accommodated in the architecture. It is difficult to grasp how situatedness does all this, and perhaps it is best to represent Goldhagen's view by quoting her. It is in the National Assembly complex in Dhaka, which she clearly considers Kahn's greatest work, that she finds Kahn's most perfect realization of "situated modernism." She writes: "[The National Assembly] is the apotheosis of Kahn's long search for a new kind of modernism that transforms monumentality into a symbolic vehicle for the nurturing of a participatory community, and intertwines that monumentality with an authenticity that situates the self." I should indicate that the ideal of authenticity, which Goldhagen derives from the existentialism that Kahn encountered in his years at Yale, plays almost as large a role in his career, in her account of it, as the search for a contextually and democratically appropriate monumentality.

But can architecture do all this? Goldhagen makes much of the point that the great National Assembly complex was to serve as the capitol of a democratic state. It was commissioned by General Ayub Khan, who had made himself ruler of Pakistan and wanted to mollify Bengali East Pakistan, which had been neglected by the rulers of the new state, with a grand new capitol. (While it was under construction, East Pakistan rebelled against the oppression of West Pakistan and became the independent state now known as Bangladesh.) It was designed as a capitol appropriate to a state whose citizens are actively involved, though such a degree of political participation has proved difficult for Pakistan in its short and turbulent history. The architecture, in Goldhagen's view, achieved its objective of political symbolism: "By dint of its blunt, individualized presence, the building forces the viewer to reflect on the nature of the institution she faces, and on her role and place within it."

Really? A look at the details of this great building suggests a different conclusion. The building is set on a huge plain, well

away from the city of Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan/Bangladesh. Consider the picture that we see on the dust jacket of Goldhagen's book. It shows the ambulatory that is created between the round inner structure that houses the Assembly and the diamond-shaped envelope of building that surrounds it. It is iconic Kahn: a monumental space, with a huge open circle cut out of a great wall, itself crossed by diagonal walkways, with large expanses of concrete and marble, serving to link an outer structure with an inner. But then we see two sweeper women with their pitiful brooms of twigs walking across the marble floors. How do they get to the building at all, one wonders? What do they make of it? And what can "situated modernism" have to do with all this?

I DO NOT mean to denigrate the great National Assembly complex. It is awesome in its size, in its mysterious cylindrical towers, in its huge openings—circles, triangles, ovals—cut through the concrete. Aesthetically speaking, it may be the most successful of all the capitols of the postwar period. But in what way, precisely, is it "situated"? Kahn resisted his clients' efforts to include direct reference to Islamic building forms, and it was quite proper and to be expected that as a modernist he would offer such resistance. But then why were his circles, triangles, ovals, and the like perforating the building?

These elements certainly create a powerful impression. And yet I think that the earlier analysts who see a shift from the social Kahn to the monumental and somewhat mystical Kahn have a point. Something *did* happen to Kahn in the early 1950s. Italy made an even greater impact on him then than it had on his visit in the 1920s. As he wrote back to his office: "Our stuff looks tinny compared to it." Or later: "Modern space is really not different from renaissance space. We still want domes. We still want walls. We still want arches, arcades and loggias of all kinds."

Kahn's most successful buildings are very beautiful. They are far from canonical modernism, whether in its stylistic character or its social objectives. One might say that Kahn's buildings incorporate a criticism of the economism and the utilitarianism of contemporary society (which is what makes buildings "tinny"), and that this tendency does connect with some themes of modernism. (It also takes us back to Ruskin.) If we find Kahn's buildings beautiful, in their emphasis on the unmodulated and uncovered structural materials, their solidity, their mysterious use of geometric figures, this is not least because we cannot imagine a completely

"situated" reason for why they are there. (Goldhagen bases her interpretation of Kahn's architecture on detailed scholarly studies, but Kahn also spoke and wrote a good deal to explain himself, and very little of this is quoted here. Much of it is indeed vague and somewhat mystical, but it might have served to communicate to some degree what he was after. His teaching and his writing had a great impact on students of architecture.)

GOLDHAGEN FOLLOWS KAHN'S development through a number of buildings and building schemes, smaller and larger. Some of these projects were synagogues and a Jewish community center, and they were important in his development. The Jewish community was exploding into the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s. Kahn had no particular connection to the Jewish community, but undoubtedly the fact that he was Jewish encouraged some congregations to approach him.

Kahn's plans for Mikveh Israel, the old Sephardic congregation of Philadelphia, which was to be built on a site adjacent to Independence Mall, are much admired. According to Richard Meier, Vincent Scully, and Paul Goldberger, speaking at a symposium at the Jewish Museum, it was perhaps the greatest synagogue design of modern architecture. It, too, is surrounded by the mysterious cylinders that eventually found realization in the Dhaka National Assembly. It is not discussed by Goldhagen. It was never built.

There were plans for another major synagogue, Adath Jeshurun, to be built in the Philadelphia suburbs, not far from where Frank Lloyd Wright was designing a new synagogue for Temple Beth Shalom, and undoubtedly Kahn was selected in order to try to match Wright's éclat. Goldhagen reproduces plans that call for a circle within a hexagon and then a triangle within a circle; but after much design work this synagogue was not built either. Kahn worked for a long time on designs for the Trenton Jewish Community Center. A bathhouse was built that Goldhagen considers very significant for his development. His design for the main buildings tried to use linked hexagons as the basic structure. That was eventually dropped for something more manageable, but that was not built either. There were also designs for a Holocaust memorial on the Battery in New York, and for the re-building of the Hurva Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem that was destroyed in the 1948-1949 war.

Goldhagen is particularly effective in discussing the impact and the significance of the monumental in Kahn's influence.

Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)," in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians" and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories." In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is

mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millennium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem," let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem."

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem."

"Settlements." When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews) – the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

This message has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159

Gerardo Joffe, President

Visit our website: www.factsandlogic.org

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements," with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

The term "settlements," too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

"Refugees." In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident

Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees – by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps," so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unrelenting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians," the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million(!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war. The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501(c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

"Monumentality," she writes, "creates the sense of social cohesion that is central to the consolidation of a community by impressing upon people the importance and power of a thing or a person. . . . Central to this impression of social power is the sense of long-lastingness; the perception that this city, building, institution, or artwork—and the values it represents—will last through generations, societies, time." That is well said, and it alerts us to a central problem of modernism.

In contrast to what we expect in the monumental, the typical works of modernism looked as if they had been put together with a stapler or a screwdriver,

and could be taken apart as easily. Modernism suggested the temporary, the immediate, the satisfaction of this particular need, here, now. The idea of building for the ages was foreign to modernism. Who knew what functions would need to be satisfied tomorrow? I do not know whether Louis Kahn's buildings were built for the ages, but he tried to make them look as if they were. In doing so, he moved far from both the aesthetic program and the social program of modernism. And we have not yet found the answer to the question that Kahn brilliantly asked about the limitations of modernism. We are still living with his dilemma. ■

ruin of Jerusalem and its temple, of the inspired threats and visions of God's spokesmen. Finally, the songs and the poems and the stories that run from Psalms to Chronicles are grouped as Writings (*Ketuvim* in Hebrew). The acronym by which Jews refer to their Bible, "Tanakh"—Torah, *Nevi'im*, *Ketuvim*—recapitulates this canonical sequence, which preserves a sense of both the manifold nature of the collection and the lengthiness of its period of composition. (In "narrative time," these writings cover the period from the beginning of the universe—by current Jewish reckoning, 5,762 years ago—to circa 533 B.C.E., the Persian conquest of Babylon.)

Taking Genesis 12:1-3, which I have quoted above, as the promontory from which we can survey this vast textual territory, we can see how these biblical books all expand upon the story of the realization of God's promise to Abraham. The core canon, the Torah, ends with the children of Israel on the east bank of the Jordan, poised to come into the Land. The larger canon, containing the Prophets and the Writings, ends similarly. In the time since Moses, centuries have passed. Israel has become a mighty nation, unified under David and his family. It has split between the northern and southern kingdoms. It has fallen to the Assyrians, then to the Babylonians, and finally to the Persians. The country is desolate, the temple and its city ruined, the people exiled. The covenant seems shattered, God's promises broken. Yet the very last sentence of the Tanakh recalls God's first words to Abraham. God stirs the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that the king frees the Judean exiles to make *aliyah*, to "go up," that is, to return. The final word in the Jewish collection is *ya'ul*: go up, go home.

IN THE 1990s, Jack Miles decided to read the Tanakh from a novel vantage point. He eschewed the historical and theological approaches to the texts familiar to him from his academic work, and instead chose to regard these ancient books, in their Jewish sequence from Genesis to Chronicles, as material for a sort of psychological study of their prime character, God. The growth and the development of God's personality provided the unifying idea for Miles's reading, which was self-consciously, lyrically literary. The result was *God: A Biography*, which appeared in 1995.

Miles's "God" was troubled, talented, moody, passionate, impetuous. A cosmic orphan (as Miles, on the basis of the Bible's presentation, characterized him), parentless, childless, the only one of his kind, "God" left to himself was incapable of self-knowledge and therefore of personal

Like Father, Like Son

By PAULA FREDRIKSEN

Christ: A Crisis in the Life of God

by Jack Miles

(Alfred A. Knopf, 348 pp., \$26)

WE THINK OF the Bible as a book. It begins at the Beginning, with Genesis, and proceeds through to its closing (2 Chronicles for Jews, Revelation for Christians), tucked neatly between two covers. But the ancient Greek term that stands behind its modern English equivalent—*ta biblia*, "the books"—conveys more accurately the manifold nature of this ancient text. This collection comprises a multitude of individual writings, whose period of composition stretches for well over a millennium. And the writings themselves are often composite documents, containing within the seeming unity of their continuous prose a multiplicity of literary genres and religious visions, of communal and regional oral traditions, of countless now-lost scribes, editors, and authors. In short, the Bible is not a book, but a library.

Beyond the conventions of modern publishing and ancient canonization, what unifies this collection? For the Jewish canon, the thread that binds together this huge mass, organizing as well as coordinating its contents, is the idea of Israel. True, Genesis opens with God creating the universe and all life in it, including that

creature uniquely made in his image and likeness, "both male and female," namely, humankind. But then God himself rests and blesses the day that follows his labors, the seventh day or Sabbath, a practice and a privilege that eventually he will extend to the family of only one man, Abraham. God makes the universe by divine fiat; but Israel he creates by an unexplained choice, over time, through a promise:

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go out from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the Land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Thereafter the great stories of Genesis—the saga from Abraham to Jacob, the adventures of Jacob's twelve sons, most especially of Joseph in Egypt—cede to the huge body of legislation, stretching from the middle of Exodus through Deuteronomy, that sets the terms of God's covenant with Israel. These five books of the Torah (the Hebrew word means "teaching") make up the core canon of the Jewish Bible. Its next sub-collection, Prophets (*Nevi'im* in Hebrew), runs from Joshua to Malachi. These books tell of the rise and fall of Israel's power, of the sovereignty and the

PAULA FREDRIKSEN is the author, most recently, of *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (Knopf).

growth. His only means to self-knowledge lay in his relations with the creature that he had formed in the Beginning in his image—that is, humanity. By turns creating his human self-image and then destroying it, “God” ultimately embarked on his peculiar relationship with Israel. The historical vicissitudes of the people of Israel as presented and preserved in the huge stretch of the biblical stories became, in Miles’s reading, the stuff of his characterological study of “God.” Through Israel, Miles’s “God” learned, as best he could, about himself.

THE CHARACTER WHO emerged from this original combination of literary theory, developmental and psychoanalytic psychology, and biblical texts was complicated, forceful, and surprisingly unappealing. By creating humans in his image, and then by giving them the order, and thus the power, to “be fertile and increase”—in effect, to make others in his image, but independently of himself—“God” inadvertently triggered “an ongoing struggle with mankind over the control of human fertility.” This struggle defined their relationship, and thus “God”’s development of his own personality. Raging against Adam and Eve for breaking a trivial prohibition, “God” cursed what he had created. Humanity’s dominion over the earth, which he himself had commanded (“fill the earth and subdue it”), he now linked inexorably with hard labor, human fertility with excruciating pain. And human life itself he blighted forever with the curse of death.

This conflicted relationship with humanity in general, which reaches a nadir when “God” destroys most of his creation with the Flood, is re-enacted *in nuce* with the family of Abraham, whom “God” blesses, curses, redeems (most spectacularly from Egypt), then abuses and abandons (most definitively through Babylon). The biblical themes of God’s mercy and of his justice, of his anger and of his compassion, of Israel’s disobedience and of their steadfastness, of the moral and historical pull of the Land in the story of the people, become in Miles’s retelling the expression of “God”’s own highly charged, deeply flawed character wherein reside both good and evil, weal and woe. In short—and little wonder, considering the historically and literarily manifold document that Miles reads as a history of a single character—“God” has a particularly violent, peculiarly unresolvable multiple personality disorder. He cannot decide who he is, he cannot define what he wants, and too often he improvises, with damaging consequences. Hideous human suffering—in particular, Israel’s suffering—is the result.

Thus the twice-told tale of exile and return that loosely shapes the Jewish canon becomes, in this case history of “God,” a recursive cycle of destruction, regret, and unstable reconciliation. “God”’s making man in his image means making man as his rival; and his destroying his rival—in Noah’s generation or later, in the Israelite generations that suffered under Assyria and Babylon—means regretting the loss of his image. In pursuit of his theme, Miles works his way in sequence from the five books of the Torah through the Prophets. Here “God,” definitely shattering his covenant by destroying Jerusalem and exiling Israel, works through his dreadful ambivalence in stages, whether manic (Isaiah), depressive (Jeremiah), or psychotic (Ezekiel). But it is only when “God”—on a whim, making a wager with Satan—inflicts unbearable sorrows on his servant Job that he finally sees, and understands that he sees, the fiend that dwells within him.

This moment of hideous self-knowledge shocks “God.” From this point onward in the Bible, Miles observes, “God” is silent, as he has no more direct speech. The closing writings of the Tanakh serve as his fade-out. In the books of Ruth and Esther, Daniel and Chronicles, human moral autonomy comes to compensate for divine silence and occultation, when “actions that once God would have taken on behalf of the Jews, statements that he once would have made to them, they now take and make for themselves.” “God,” trapped and perhaps paralyzed by the conflicting elements of his own character, recedes. Man alone is left.

HERE, AT THE close of his book, Miles ends with a haunting reflection on the problem of evil. All cultures deal with the questions arising from war, death, disease, meaning (and its dark twin, meaninglessness), the unbearable suffering of the innocent. In Western monotheistic systems, however, the problem is particularly acute, because it ends as an indictment of God. (“How can a good God allow this to happen?”) Reading the Bible as a record of “God”’s moral development, Miles construed evil as a symptom of a divine identity conflict, created when the various ancient Semitic deities with their particular functions (creator, destroyer, warrior, guardian, lover, mother) all fused, in Israelite monotheism, into an impossibly overcharged single personality. Thus the troubled character of the biblical God is as much (or even more) a part of the problem of evil than a part of its solution. Contemporary Western culture, Miles concluded, remains even now haunted by this God who, though absent, has never finally de-

parted. This God is the “divided original whose divided image we remain. His is the restless breathing we still hear in our sleep.”

What made Miles’s book enjoyable, even exhilarating, was not its chief character—his “God” gave me, and even himself, the creeps—but the breadth of education and culture that his development of its tortured chief character put on display. Miles drew widely and deeply on great stores of knowledge—of literature and music; of Semitic philology and ancient Near Eastern history; of poetry ancient and modern, in myriad languages. His writing made the reader think; his ideas about various aspects of biblical literature made one stop and reflect on familiar texts in new ways. Despite his creation of one of the most repellent characters in recent fiction, then, Miles communicated an image of himself as a writer that was appealing, erudite, ethical, and deeply humane. The pleasure of reading *God* was, in no small way, the pleasure of getting to know Miles.

God: A Biography, based as it was on the Jewish canon, inevitably suggested its own sequel. Could Miles produce a characterological study of Christ, the chief *dramatis persona* of the New Testament, by similarly following the sequence of books in the Christian canon?

AS AN EPILOGUE to the Tanakh, the New Testament is both similar and dissimilar to the foundational collection. Much newer and much shorter (its twenty-seven texts all seem to have been written sometime roughly in the closing half of the first century), it is much more focused on a single and singular theme: the redemptive consequences of the life and the death of Jesus of Nazareth, a historical personage in a way that God is not. Like the Tanakh, this shorter collection can itself be seen as a twice-told tale of suffering and salvation. The first and tighter cycle follows the narrative of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as conveyed (variously) in the first four writings that open the Christian canon, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The second and longer cycle that involves Jesus’s generation (he died circa 30 C.E.) and the generations thereafter unrolls in the rest of the New Testament’s writings (some of which, such as Paul’s letters, were written some twenty years before the Gospel of Mark, the earliest Gospel). These describe and promise a recapitulation of Jesus’s experience of death and resurrection for the believer, to be accomplished definitely when Jesus himself repeats the divine drama by coming again, defeating evil, and returning to God the Father together with those who have now been raised, like him, from the dead.

But the New Testament's first four books are not like the Tanakh's first five. Rather than developing a master narrative that moves across all four writings from a start to a close, the Gospels tell Jesus's story four times, around the core of his public mission, from baptism to crucifixion. The effect is like *Rashomon*, and the personality of Jesus, the characterizations of his friends, followers, and opponents, the sequence and the significance of speeches and events, all shift and change in each re-telling. Their central message, like their central character, changes too. The first three Gospels, of Matthew, Mark, and Luke—the synoptic or “seen-together” gospels—all proclaim, with different accents, Jesus of Nazareth's teachings about the coming Kingdom of God. The fourth Gospel, John, is strikingly different, and focuses instead on the theological significance of Jesus as the divine Son.

Historians going at this diverse material must endlessly sort through and discriminate among traditions—earlier and later; plausible, implausible, and impossible—in quest of the Jesus of history. Theologians too, like historians, though according to different criteria, must also make choices, deciding what to emphasize and what to play down when constructing or interpreting church doctrine about Jesus within the traditions of their particular communities of faith. How might Miles, as a “literary” writer telling a unified story while drawing on the Gospels' many different ones, approach these sources and negotiate their differences? Miles came up with a simple, audacious interpretive stratagem. His new book is not a story about Jesus. It is, instead, a continuation of his earlier fictional biography based on the Tanakh. The main character in *Christ* is not Jesus: it is “God.”

THINGS HAVE NOT gone well, either for “God” or for Israel, since last we saw them at the end of Miles's earlier book. The prophets had spoken in luminous terms of the glories of Israel's return from exile: the crooked ways would be made straight; David's line would be established forever; the Temple, restored and beautiful, would draw all nations to itself. Evidently, says Miles, the prophets—and thus “God,” whose message they mediated—were wrong. The victorious parade home was canceled. Few responded to Cyrus's invitation to return. The Second Temple was a paltry, inglorious affair. And in the half-millennium between Cyrus and Jesus, the people and the land of Israel simply passed from one foreign suzerainty to another, from Persia to the Hellenistic kingdoms that followed Alexander the Great to—finally and most disastrously—Rome.

In sum, “God” has discovered that he could not or would not keep his promise. Owing to his failure, not theirs, his covenant with Israel has lapsed. Worse, “God” foresees in the coming of Rome a more devastating destruction than even Babylon had wrought. In the year 70 C.E., Rome would demolish Jerusalem, crucifying so many thousands of Jews in the course of a long and vicious siege that the land surrounding the city would be stripped, denuded of trees. After 135 C.E., defeating the Bar Kochba revolt that in many ways was the last gasp of the war in 70, Rome erased Jerusalem altogether, planting in its stead a pagan city called Aelia Capitolina. Israel again was savaged and scattered in an exile more enduring than that under Babylon. “God” cannot or will not do anything about any of this; but still he must do something.

But what? Relying primarily on John's Gospel, Miles presents the answer to the conundrum that he has constructed. His tormented chief character determines to resolve the ongoing crisis of his conflicted personality. “God” understands that he is the one fundamentally responsible for having humanity in general, and Israel in particular, in their dreadful situation of suffering and death. He understands that he, not Israel, has failed to keep their covenant. Finally, and most fundamentally, he understands that he, not they, is the one who sinned in the Garden of Eden. They ate the forbidden fruit; but he, in his intemperate fury, cursed his own creation with suffering and death. In the past, from time to time, “God” has been merciful; but now, on the cusp of a new devastation, he has become penitent. And so he resolves to change—to change himself, to change the covenant, to change the world. “God” decides to become “God Incarnate.”

Entering human history as an embodied male Jew, Miles writes, “God” atones for his abandoning Jerusalem to Rome by arranging for Jerusalem to abandon him to Rome first. Hence, for purposes of emplotment, the prominence of Passover in this story about the death of “God” and the redemption of his character. “The lamb whose blood saved the Israelites from God's Angel of Death at the first Passover becomes the divine lamb or Lamb of God whose blood saves all mankind from God's own curse at the second Passover.” By becoming human, by dying as he knows so many Jews will die, “God” reconstitutes his own identity. By rising from the dead and thus promising eternal life to all humanity, “God” renews his own creation. Through his own incarnation, death, and resurrection, “God” starts over again.

RE-READING THESE familiar texts from a novel perspective, Miles once more produces startling, even daring results. “God” as “God Incarnate” can flirt with women, duel with Satan, toy with his followers, and baffle his interlocutors in ways that speak immediately, indeed shockingly, to modern sensibilities. Released from any obligation to history or to theology, telling his tale with anachronistic abandon, Miles uses these culturally powerful scenes from the Gospels in imaginative ways to create new insights into these texts and into ourselves, their cultural progeny.

Still, as readers of his story we must ask: how does “God”'s crucifixion resolve anything, really? What difference does it make whether “God” himself dies if his death fails to avert the deaths of so many others? How does an indefinitely postponed celestial wedding of “God” and humanity—the happy ending for which Miles strains by concluding with themes culled from the Book of Revelation—help anything at all? If “God”'s character, in Miles's fiction, is the question, then how do any of these other elements—suffering, death, resurrection—provide an aesthetically pleasing and dramatically satisfying answer?

They do not, and they cannot. Flush with mythological potency in antiquity, their power has diminished with age: what worked as a resolution to the problem of evil as it was imagined in the first century does not work in the same way now. Miles uses these elements of the Gospel stories because he has to use them: if they are unsuccessful, they are also obligatory. Why? Because Miles, despite his authorial freedom to cast his chief character as an intemperate, conflicted sadist and then to change him into a prescient, penitent masochist, is himself constrained by his texts. As the postmodern author of a postmodern fiction, Miles could eschew a resolution to his story entirely, rather than re-use an ancient one that does not fit the tale that he tells; but he seems to want his book to be both a fictional story about “God Incarnate” and a literary reading of the New Testament. He thus cannot bypass or ignore the canon's emphasis on crucifixion and resurrection, though aesthetically these elements compromise his story by moving it, at the end, from fiction to fantasy. For this reason, what defines his project also limits it.

But what is Miles's project? In a foreword to the reader of his book, at several points along the way, and again in a concluding appendix (“The Bible as Rose Window, or, How Not to See Through the Bible”), Miles offers his text as a form of literary appreciation of the New Testa-

ment. His essay, he says, is meant to help the reader to regard and to savor the New Testament's religiously motivated artistry, just as the visitor to a cathedral might enjoy the play of light in stained glass. And again at several points in this book, as in his earlier one, he remarks upon the parsimony of biblical prose in order to state one of his chief principles of interpretation. It is this: since everything insignificant has been left out, assume that everything kept in is significant. By so committing his attention, Miles can conjure observations of genuine subtlety from seemingly incidental narrative details.

The problem is that Miles the author of this theo-biographical fiction must abandon, overlook, or ignore the greater part of those New Testament texts to which Miles the literary critic is committed to interpreting. He does so in order to use them to tell the story of Jesus as a continuation of the story of his previous fictive character, "God." Thus the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke scarcely figure in his account at all, because the literary conceit that Jesus is actually "God" is best accommodated by the Gospel of John. Where scenes or sayings that Miles does want to use occur in the Synoptics, he will splice lines into block paragraphs taken from John, and then comment on the text that he has thereby created. The intellectual end point—what Miles has to say—is often pleasing. But to write a new biblical text by clever editing in order to make the point seems, well, unorthodox, or at least not quite kosher, as a technique of biblical interpretation, literary or otherwise.

MILES'S SEVERAL FEINTS in the direction of history also confuse his enterprise. Invoking Josephus, he suggests that the number of Jews slaughtered by Rome following the siege of Jerusalem was "comparable to the portion that perished in the Nazi *shoah*." But we do not know how many Jews—or, for that matter, how many people—lived in the Roman Empire in the first century, nor how many resided farther east, outside the empire. Nor do we know how many died in the siege: Josephus's figures are notoriously unreliable. Hence we do not and cannot know if the one slaughter correlates in any respect—impact, numbers—with the other. Why does Miles speak as if he does know, or can know? He seems to be reaching for an aesthetic effect, wherein Romans correlate with Nazis, first-century debacle with twentieth-century genocide. His true subject is theodicy, God's (and, for his story, "God"'s) inaction in the face of evil. The poor historical analogies just get in the way.

But Miles makes such analogies because he attempts to situate his modern literary understanding of Christianity in real time, in the ancient past. Despite his explicit disavowal of a historical standpoint, his project veers into an attempt at historical explanation. Thus he writes that the horror of the war with Rome "can scarcely fail to have raised many of the radical or desperate questions about God that, to some, seem to have arisen for the first time in the twentieth century. As for radical or desperate answers to those questions, one seems to have been the Christian vision of the divine warrior self-disarmed." The pacifism that "God Incarnate" preaches—love your enemy, turn the other cheek, and so on—is the "radical reversal in the divine identity" required, indeed created, by the ancient evangelists contemplating God's failure to protect his people. An ancient religious imagination, writes Miles, transformed the Jews' slaughter into God's crisis of conscience, resolved in and through the Christian revision of the Tanakh. God, newly pacifist, put himself on the cross; God, newly international, made a new covenant with all mankind.

BUT MILES IS wrong. The ancient slaughter *did* fail to raise the same sorts of "radical or desperate questions about God" that the twentieth-century slaughter raised, because ancient people are not modern people, and they thought about things differently. The New Testament texts, unedited, advance different claims about Jesus, about God, and about the resolution of the problem of evil from the ones that Miles creates and then, confusingly, attributes to them. First and most obviously, the Gospels do not identify Jesus with God: they are two different persons. Even in those passages that present Jesus as divine, he is subordinate, and this subordination of divine entities under one supreme deity is consistent with the tenets of ancient monotheism. Moreover, the doctrine of Christ as fully God and fully man was a fourth-century teaching, one that could be defended by an appeal to the first-century texts, but not one native to them. And even the fully divine/fully human Christ was imagined as another "person" distinct from God.

Christian pacifist traditions predate the war with Rome by twenty years (they appear also in Paul's letters), so they are not a response to it. And the pacifists were Jesus's followers, not Jesus himself. During his mission, Jesus threatened unsympathetic villages with total annihilation. In post-resurrection traditions about him, he returns as a warrior, descending from heaven with a cry of command, leading

angelic legions, defeating powers and principalities: no divine disarmament here. And the canonical vision of the Christian end-time is not at all inclusive. From among all the nations, only the "saints"—that is, those Christians whose religious vision coincides with that of the particular author—will be saved. Plenty of others—Jews, pagans, other Christians—are excluded from salvation.

As for Rome's defeat of Jerusalem, as far as the historical evangelists are concerned, God did act, just as he had acted through Assyria and Babylon in the more distant past. The old paradigm, renounced by Miles's "God," worked fine for them. The evangelists' God sent Rome against Jerusalem to punish Jerusalem for killing Christ. No mystery there; and little visible trauma; and, for that matter, no turning of the messianic cheek. Imperial slaughter did not imperil the world's meaning, or the Bible's meaning, for these ancient authors. They were innocent of Spinoza and Nietzsche. Atrocity, for them, did not entail the peril of atheism.

THE FORCE AND the originality of Miles's reading of ancient Christian texts lie precisely in his freedom from responsibility either to history (what may or may not have actually happened in the past) or to theology (the systematic religious sense that Christian communities have made of their books and their view of that past). It is Miles's modern secular imagination, not some ancient Jewish religious one, that conceived of the Gospels as a tale of divine disarmament. And it is our world, not the world of antiquity, that provides the generative elements of Miles's story, and the moral and cultural context that gives it power. Miles knows this, though when he reaches for historical explanation he seems to forget it.

The biblical rose window of Miles's literary appreciation has been shattered by modernity's experience of the problem of evil. And it is to this problem—the death of God as imagined not by John, but by Nietzsche; the death of man as accomplished not by Nebuchadnezzar or Vespasian, but by Hitler and so many others—that Miles has directed his imagination. Whatever his intentions, his book conducts us to an appreciation not of the Bible, but of our own nihilism. By drawing selectively on the richest library to have survived from antiquity, the most generatively important collection of books in our culture, Miles has narratively re-imagined the problem of evil and provided a resolution. But alas: the happy ending, even in a work of fiction, is a victim of our times, and cannot convincingly conclude this story. ■

NEW ORLEANS DIARIST

Masked

IN MY ADMITTEDLY LIMITED experience, Carnival season has a deflationary effect on the news cycle in New Orleans. In the weeks before and the days after Mardi Gras, the stories covered by the newspapers and the evening news are predictable and mostly light. We hear about hotel occupancy rates, arrest statistics, and announcements about celebrities participating in this or that parade. And once it's over and the cleanup begins, there is a tally of how much trash was collected—the depressing barometer the city uses to gauge the relative success of its biggest tourist attraction.

I HAD A FEELING THIS YEAR WOULD be different, though, when I received an anonymous recorded phone call a few weeks ago attacking one of the candidates in the city's upcoming mayoral election. "Don't be fooled" by Ray Nagin—a Cox Communications cable executive whose mayoral candidacy had just begun to surge—the automated female voice warned me. Despite his outsider talk, the voice continued, Nagin is a tool of outgoing Mayor Marc Morial's "machine"; voters who want a break with the past would be well advised not to support him. The recording didn't suggest who a better candidate might be or give any indication as to who funded this sneak attack. It just ended. I hit *69 and got a recording saying the call had come from (000) 000-0000. *The Times-Picayune* subsequently reported that the mystery calls were carefully targeted to white voters (Nagin, like most of his mayoral competitors, is black). But the paper never determined who was behind them. It was equally hard to figure out which candidates were behind many of the carefully targeted campaign mailings—frequently containing wild allegations of wrongdoing—that marked this year's election. In a city notorious for its inefficiency, political opponents are nonetheless smeared with dazzling precision.

DAYS AFTER I RECEIVED MY PRE-recorded call, Nagin was the surprise top finisher in the first round of voting; last weekend he won the runoff by a solid 59 to 41 margin. It was a fascinating campaign

for a relative New Orleans newcomer like me. But even old-timers seemed surprised by the race, which culminated in the town—where the good times roll and political practices are politely described as "colorful"—settling on a bona fide businessman as its new leader. The Big Easy has been losing jobs and population for decades; what was once a financial center for the South is today an economic backwater, a punch-line city that's been described as having a business and political culture more Caribbean than American. While cities from Austin to Atlanta have developed whole new economic sectors, here it's all about tourism, oil, and the port, as it has been for years. So you can see why New Orleanians might be ready for a change.

PERHAPS THE MOST STARTLING THING about the Nagin candidacy is that his entire campaign lasted just about three months. As recently as mid-January, he was registering about 5 percent in the polls, just another face in a field of 15 candidates. Most of the top challengers were political veterans, and the "outsider" vote seemed to be coalescing around Richard Pennington, the police chief. Though Pennington was the early front-runner, he suffered from the perception that he was secretly controlled by Morial—exactly the same charge later leveled against Nagin in that blind phone call I received. It was an odd complaint given that Morial is a popular two-term mayor who even now enjoys sky-high approval ratings. Despite this, his attempt to amend the city charter to run for a third term was stomped by voters, whose general feeling about him seems to be, "Marc did a great job, and we want all traces of him removed from public life." Nor was Morial the only political insider whose endorsement was seen as anathema. Indeed, as Nagin gained momentum, the police chief started criticizing him for gaining too much support from influentials who had previously been in Pennington's camp. "I'm glad they're all with you now, because you're stuck with them," he told Nagin in one of their debates. This attempted jujitsu was of a piece with Pennington's entire campaign. First came a radio ad, aimed at black voters, suggesting that Nagin is a closet Republican who supported George W. Bush and ought to be called "Ray Reagan." (Pennington, like Nagin and 67 percent of the New Orleans population, is black.) Weeks later Pennington was running ads prominently featuring praise for his police work from the previously demonized Bush.

THEN THERE WERE THE SMEARS, many of them—like the phone call I received—mysterious in origin. The day

before Mardi Gras, Pennington held a news conference to announce that he had obtained information "that sickens me to my core" concerning Nagin's business practices, which he pronounced "abusive, if not corrupt." It took two more days before he made the more specific (if something short of core-sickening) charge that millionaire Nagin had tried to launch a car-rental business under a program for "disadvantaged" minorities. The mudslinging peaked days later when Pennington accused Nagin of circulating an anonymous letter alleging that the police chief was a wife beater. This sordid turn drowned out the familiar post-Carnival news, which found that though trash tonnage was up, hotel business was "not as robust" as in the past. And, as *The Times-Picayune's* social columnist enthused, the Mistick Krewe of Comus ball—a surreally anachronistic masked affair that ends the season—once again "served as an apogee of Carnival tradition and excitement."

WATCHING ALL THIS—BOTH THE mayoral campaign and the Carnival backdrop—it was hard not to dwell on the cliché of New Orleans as a city of masks. The election made it easy to cook up conspiracy theories. Pennington's forked relationship to Bush was just one example of a candidacy that seemed like a study in masking—an impression driven home when he commented just over a week before Election Day that, if he could start over, "I probably would have a little bit more control of my campaign." So who was controlling it? And what about Nagin? Nothing "sickening" about his business past emerged, but he did fudge facts about whether he was a certified public accountant and whether Morial had helped him to found a local minor-league hockey team. Was Nagin really in Morial's pocket after all? And who was behind that allegation anyway?

BUT THE MOST INTERESTING QUESTIONS are about New Orleans itself. True, the election seemed driven by a hunger for change. And yet the general culture here seems proud and determined to resist change. Mardi Gras is merely the most conspicuous example both of an obsession with "tradition" and of the city marketing itself as, above all else, a unique party environment. The relentless focus on tourism has amounted to New Orleans betting its future on its skill in preserving its past. Can Nagin alter that mindset? Does anybody really want him to?

ROB WALKER

ROB WALKER (robwalker.net) is a columnist for *Slate*.

Why is the United States a Bystander to Genocide?

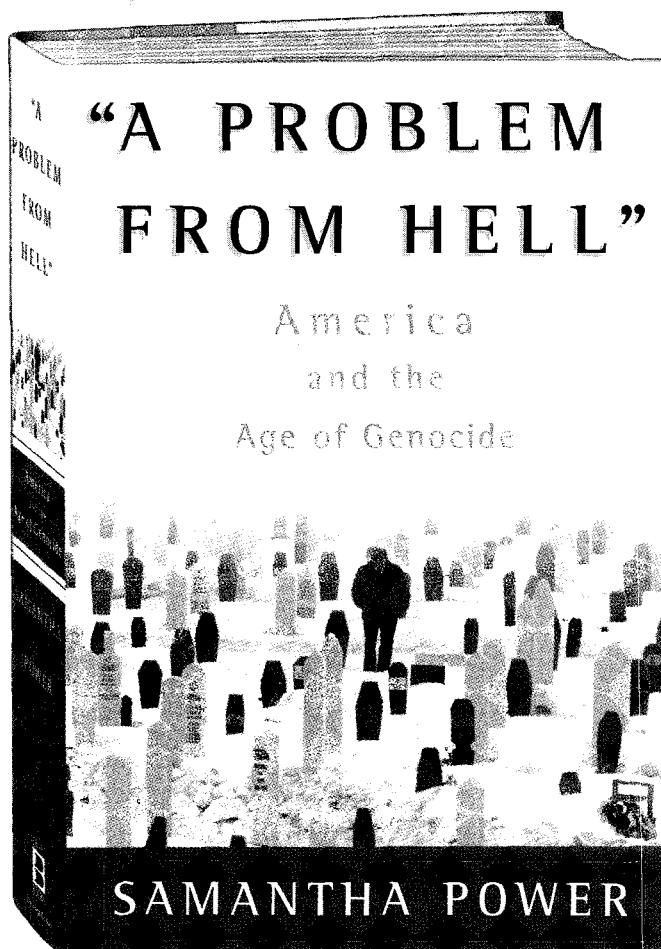


photo: Tsar Fedorsky

From the Turkish slaughter of the Armenians to the Nazi Holocaust to Rwanda, Samantha Power delivers a suspenseful history of Americans who have stood by—and stood up—in the face of genocide. She reveals just what was known when, and what might have been done to stop the slaughter of millions.

“Some books elegantly record history; some books make history. This book does both..... It is a history of our country that has never before been told, and it should change the way we see America and its role in the world.” —DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN

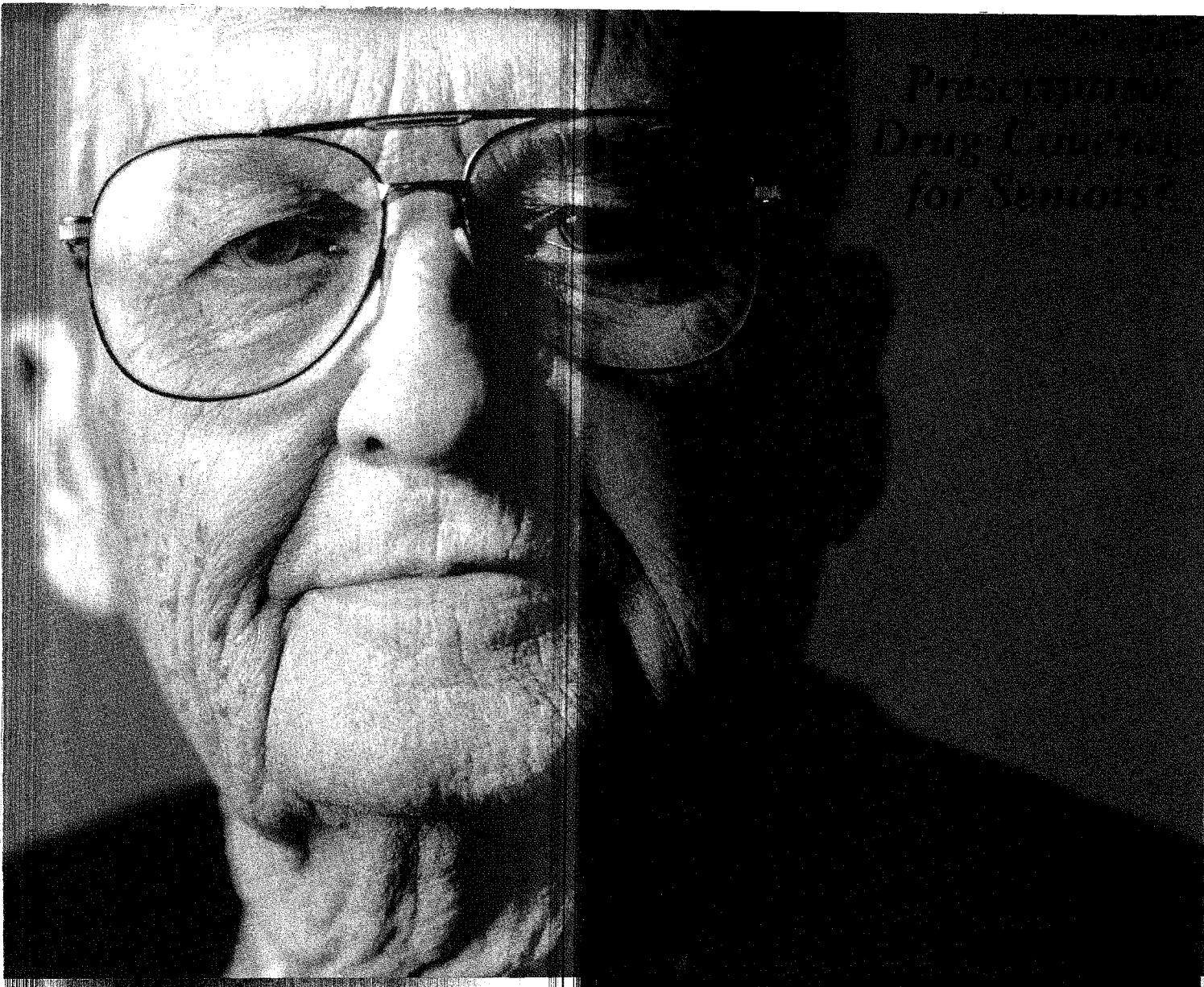
“Samantha Power has written one of those rare books that is truly as important as its subject....she carries us deep behind the scenes of history-in-the-making.” —PHILIP GOUREVITCH

“Samantha Power writes with an admirable mix of erudition and passion, she focuses fiercely on the human costs of indifference and passivity, and she instills shame and dismay in the reader.” —STANLEY HOFFMANN, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

“This is a serious and compelling work, and should be read by policy makers everywhere, before they confront the genocides that are waiting in the wings.” —PAUL M. KENNEDY, author of THE RISE AND FALL OF GREAT POWERS

A New Republic Book
www.basicbooks.com

 **BASIC BOOKS**
A Member of the Perseus Books Group



*Prescription
Drug Coverage
for Seniors*

It Can Be Done...

It Should Be Done

*Prescription drug
coverage for seniors —
Now is the time!*

As Congress renews the debate over prescription drug coverage for American seniors, we reaffirm our support for creating a meaningful coverage benefit.

What is the measure of a meaningful benefit?

It must provide choice ... fully assist the poorest seniors ... spur competition ... include access to all medicines ... foster, not frustrate, drug research ... and permit those seniors who already have drug coverage — to keep it.

Prescription drug coverage for seniors? It can be done ... It should be done!

PhRMA
Pharmaceutical Research and
Manufacturers of America
New Medicines. New Hope.
www.phrma.org